

Mubarak and Arafat to meet Monday in Cairo

CAIRO (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will hold talks in Cairo Monday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the state of the peace process, Palestinian officials here said Sunday. "The two presidents will examine the threats which are putting pressure on the peace process and the situation regarding the blockade in the territories," said Zuhdi Khudra, the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) representative in Cairo. The two men spoke by telephone Saturday, and Mr. Mubarak discussed the halted negotiations with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the previous day. Israeli-Palestinian talks have been halted since Israel began work in March on a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem. Tensions further escalated when 14 Israelis were killed in bombings in Jerusalem on July 30.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي

Jordanian medical aid to reach PNA today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Upon directives from His Majesty King Hussein, a shipment of medical aid will be sent today to the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) territories. Minister of Health and Health Care Ashraf Kurdi coordinated with his Palestinian counterpart, Riyad Zaanoun, on measures concerning the transport of these supplies to the PNA.

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Majali discusses 'boycott' tension with 5 pro-poll opposition parties

By Francesca Ciriael
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali yesterday discussed with leaders from five opposition parties willing to participate in the Nov. 4 elections possible measures to ease tension between the government and the other pro-boycott opposition parties.

"I had the impression that the prime minister was trying to study the situation and get ideas to carry on the dialogue" with the opposition groups, one participant in Saturday's meeting told the Jordan Times.

With their refusal to join the Islamists and other four opposition groups in their call for a general boycott of the polls, the five left-leaning opposition parties have placed themselves somewhat in between the pro-government wing, dominated by the National Constitutional Party (NCP), and the pro-boycott opposition groups, led by the Muslim Brotherhood.

The resumption of the government-opposition dialogue next week, announced by Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi on Saturday, will aim at finding common grounds and put together a list of feasible requests the government can meet.

Hence, yesterday's "reconciliation" meeting between Dr. Majali and leaders of the non-boycott

cotting opposition parties.

In the one-and-a-half-hour talks, 10 representatives from the Jordan Democratic People's Unity Party, the Communist Party, the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party, the Ba'ath Progressive Party, and the Arab Land Party (ALP) presented a list of measures they believe should be enforced in order to "create the right atmosphere and ensure the integrity" of the polls, ALP Secretary General Mohammed Ouran said.

Though the five parties are in favour of participation, "that does not mean that we think that no special measures should be taken in order to guarantee the integrity and freedom of elections," Dr. Ouran stressed.

The prime minister discussed the five parties' demands and "even agreed with us on some points, but he did not promise anything," stated Dr. Ouran.

The party representatives brought up the sticky issue of the presence within Dr. Majali's cabinet of some ministers belonging to the NCP and asked the prime minister whether he intends to reshuffle his cabinet ahead of the elections in order to ensure the government's neutrality.

The IAF has repeatedly asked that Cabinet members directly involved with the NCP, like Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha, resign before the elections. Mohammed Khair

Keilani, a member of the NCP Executive Committee, confirmed yesterday in a telephone interview with the Jordan Times that "four Cabinet members are registered members in the NCP," though only one of them, Mr. Khreisha, holds an executive position in the party.

Mr. Keilani listed the names of Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Bassam Saket, Minister of Culture and Youth Qassem Abu Ein, and Dr. Mutawi.

Confronted in yesterday's meeting with the issue of at least one-sixth of his ministers belonging to one specific party, Dr. Majali answered that "when he formed his cabinet (last March), he could not have known that those ministers would join the NCP," Dr. Ouran told the Jordan Times.

The NCP was officially announced in May, and it was born from the merger of nine previous political parties.

The meeting also discussed the establishment of a joint committee including government and party members to supervise the elections and deal with election issues.

"The committee could also provide a general framework for the government-opposition dialogue," noted Dr. Ouran.

He added that the five parties' demands to the prime minister included empower-

ing the Ministry of Justice with the responsibility of declaring the validity of the upcoming elections. According to the present system, the new Parliament will declare whether elections were legal and constitutional.

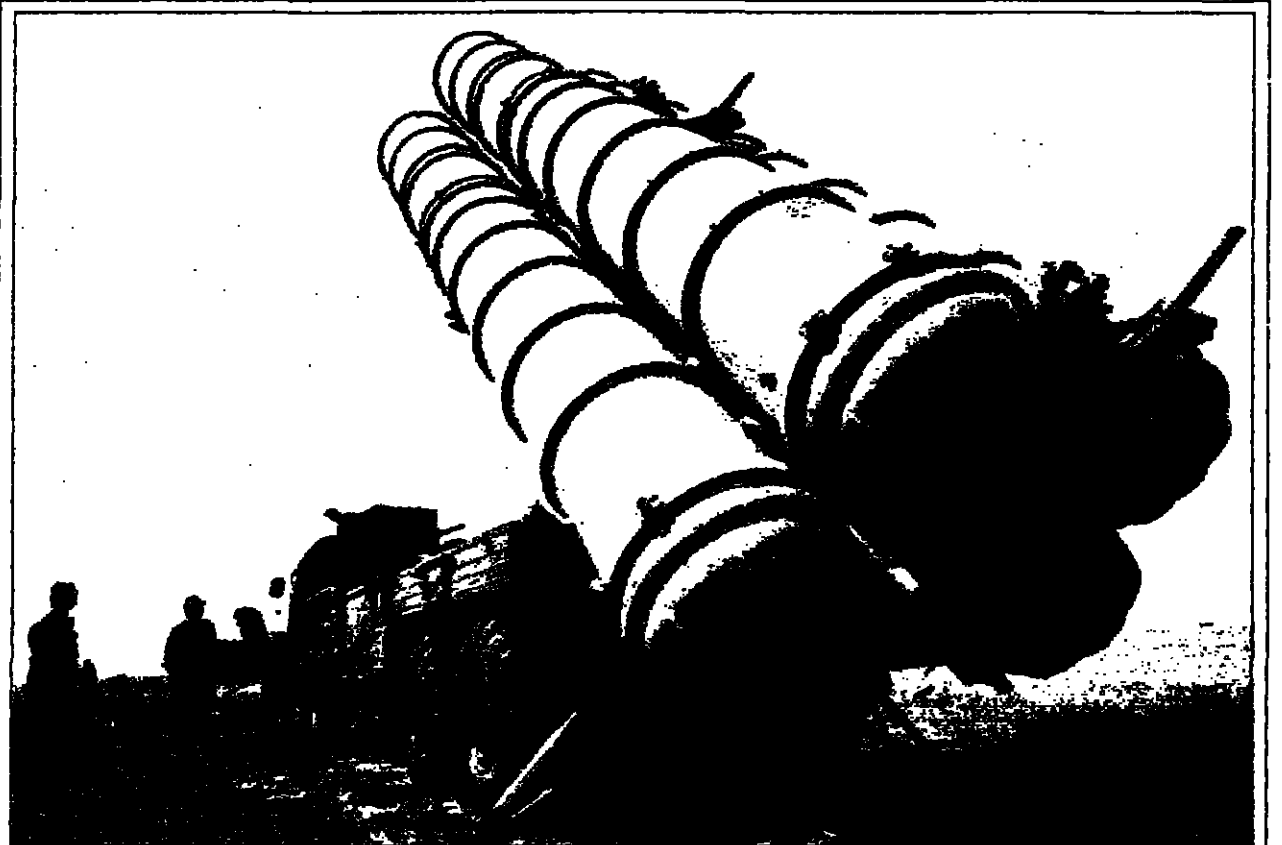
Dr. Ouran also said the party representatives asked Dr. Majali to halt the Ministry of Interior's ongoing inspections on financial and non-financial party affairs. He said recent measures taken by the Ministry of Interior to evaluate the parties' compliance with the 1992 Political Parties Law "are not helping to ease the already tense atmosphere between the government and the parties."

The meeting also dealt with regional issues.

Dr. Ouran said the five parties demanded the boycott of the upcoming Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Summit scheduled to be held in Doha in November, in protest against the hard-line policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour was present at the meeting.

Party representatives to the meeting included Ba'ath Socialist Party Secretary General Tayseer Homs, Ba'ath Progressive Party Vice-President Fouad Dabour and Democratic People's Unity Party Secretary General Said Diab.



CYPRUS WILL DEPLOY MISSILES DESPITE THREATS: A 1996 file picture shows Russian SS300 air-defence missiles being prepared to be launched at a military training ground in Russia. Greek-Cypriot Foreign Minister Yiannakis Cassoulidis said in an interview published Sunday that his government is determined to deploy Russian-made missiles despite Turkish threats to use force to prevent their arrival (AFP photo)

Ceasefire monitors say Israel should keep Lahad from attacking civilians

TYRE (R) — An international group monitoring the violations of the rules of the conflict in south Lebanon called on Israel and Lebanon to prevent attacks against civilians after a week of fierce fighting in the region. "The group acknowledged that those cooperating with Israel deliberately fired artillery rounds into the city of Sidon, killing six innocent civilians — one of them an infant, wounding 42 others, and causing extensive property damage," the committee said in a statement Saturday night.

The attack on Sidon Monday, in which local hospitals said killed seven civilians, came during one of the bloodiest weeks in south Lebanon since a 1996 ceasefire barring attacks on civilians.

"The group concluded that it is incumbent upon Israel to keep those cooperating with it from carrying out such attacks and that it shall do its utmost to achieve this commitment," said the statement. Israel distanced itself from

the attack. The ceasefire monitors — officials from Lebanon, Israel, Syria, the United States and France — also condemned a Hizbollah Katyusha rocket attack on northern Israel and urged the Lebanese government to prevent such assaults.

They "acknowledged that a Lebanese armed group deliberately launched more than 50 Katyusha rockets into populated areas in Israel."

"The group concluded that it is incumbent upon Lebanon to keep Lebanese armed groups from carrying out such attacks and that it shall do its utmost to achieve this commitment," the statement said.

One Israeli civilian was lightly wounded in the Katyusha attack. At least one rocket accidentally landed in south Lebanon, injuring a Lebanese civilian, the group said.

A source close to the ceasefire talks said the statement calling on Israel and Lebanon to shield civilians

from attacks contained stronger language than previous ones.

The group was established after a 17-day Israeli offensive in south Lebanon that killed 200 people — mostly civilians — in April 1996. It is designed to examine alleged violations of the parties' pact not to target civilians.

The committee began meeting Wednesday in Naqoura, Lebanon, south of Tyre, and ended talks Saturday. It fielded 10 complaints of alleged violations of the ceasefire deal.

Pessimism has recently grown over the effectiveness of the group as a growing number of civilians have been caught up in the bloodshed in the south.

Sources close to the meeting had told Reuters that the talks were being hampered by Israeli refusal to be blamed for the Sidon shelling and Lebanese insistence that it accept condemnation.

Ten civilians, three Hizbollah guerrillas and one Israeli-backed militiaman have been killed in south Lebanon this week.

The troubles began on Monday in the pro-Israeli militia enclave of Jezzine, just north of Israel's 15 kilometre-wide south Lebanon occupation zone.

A roadside bomb blew up a car, killing the children of the late South Lebanon Army (SLA) commander of Jezzine, who died in a similar blast four years ago.

Israel's client SLA militiamen hit back by shelling Sidon. Hizbollah retaliated by firing Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, triggering the Israeli air force's biggest attack into Lebanon in 16 months. Violence continued Saturday.

Israeli troops killed three Hizbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon in fierce clashes that included air raids and artillery exchanges.

"The parties to the understanding expressed great concern over the increase in serious and deadly incidents in the last week," the statement said.

U.S., Jordan to sign agreements Tuesday providing \$100 million in additional aid

AMMAN (USIS) — Jordan and the United States will Tuesday sign two agreements under which Washington will provide Jordan with additional economic and development financial assistance totalling \$100 million for this year.

These grants will be made available through the Peace and Stability Fund which U.S. President Bill Clinton announced in June during the visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince

Hassan to the United States.

Mr. Clinton said then that the fund was established in appreciation of the constructive role Jordan is playing in building peace and stability in the Middle East.

The agreements will be signed at the Ministry of Planning by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley W. Egan and Director of the United States Agency for International Develop-

ment in Jordan Lewis Lucke.

During the same ceremony, a third U.S. government grant agreement will also be signed providing \$3.4 million for the Population and Family Health Programme in Jordan. Activities through this programme are designed to address the demand for family planning services and to enhance the ability of the government to sustain important gains in maternal and child health care.

Suspected Algerian militants kill 38 in ongoing bloodbath — paper

PARIS (R) — Suspected Islamist rebels killed 38 civilians in two Algerian villages and aboard a train in the latest attacks reported by the Algerian press Sunday.

News of the killings coincided with survivors of another massacre telling of the horror in their village when 64 people were slaughtered and 15 girls kidnapped.

"Hidden behind a rock, I saw the criminals... push a score of people into a courtyard to cut their throats... I heard my sister crying out when they slit her throat," Mohammad Sherrif, 39, told L'Authentique newspaper, describing the scene in Souhane village late last week.

Sunday's reported toll brings to more than 100 the number of Algerians killed in the past three days, with at least 21 young women also being kidnapped. Algeria's main Arabic-language newspaper Al Khabar said an armed group cut the throats of 20 people at the end of the week in Faid Al Batma, near Djelfa, capital of the

province of the same name some 225 kilometres south of Algiers.

The group took away six young girls.

Most kidnapped girls, sometimes as young as 12, are taken to serve as "temporary brides" to the rebels before being killed.

The newspaper, quoting local sources, also said that at Ain Al Mabel, also near Jelfa, an armed group overnight Thursday-Friday killed 10 other people. It gave no other details.

Two bombs blasted a train Saturday, killing eight people and wounding 22, Al Khabar said. The attack was the third recently on trains linking western Algeria to the capital.

Al Khabar said one bomb, placed on the rail track between two stations at Oued Jer and Al Afroun in Blida province, wrecked the first coach. Another bomb went off minutes later as passengers were trying to flee the wreckage.

There has been no official confirmation of the attacks. But in what diplomats view as tacit confirmation, the official Algerian News

Agency (APS) Sunday included in its press roundup a reference to the Souhane massacre.

At the weekend, a hospital doctor reported the killing of 64 people overnight Thursday in Souhane village in Blida province, 50 kilometres south of the Algerian capital.

One resident, Abdul Rahman Aliouet, 64, said he was woken by cries at 11.30 p.m., realised what was happening and grabbed his granddaughters.

"I went to the door. There I was hit by the blast of a sawn-off shotgun which blew off my arm. My granddaughters continued to run, which is what saved them..." he told L'Authentique newspaper.

"Thanks to the dark, I was able to hide but saw them cut the throat of my son-in-law and my two other granddaughters, put them in the garage and set it on fire. Then they kidnapped my daughter."

The newspaper added, "Fatima Sherrif is 10-year-old and second in her class. Hit in the stomach by two

bullets and left for dead, she calls for her father who is dead."

Violence erupted in Algeria after the authorities in January 1992 cancelled a general election in which the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had taken a huge lead.

About 60,000 people have since been killed, including more than 800 civilians and 300 rebels since last June 5 when a fresh general election was held.

Some Algerian officials say the massacres are an attempt by militants to maintain an image of power after being driven from cities. Others say the killings result from a power-struggle between rival rebel groups.

Algeria's prime minister and president have both attributed the killings to last desperate acts of "residual terrorism," while opposition groups say security forces have been involved in some killings.

Diplomats suspect a mixture of all this lies behind the slaughter.

Israeli blockade hits Bethlehem schools hard; PNA rejects 'student permit' offer

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Palestinian officials said Sunday they had rejected an offer from Israel to slightly ease a 25-day-old military blockade of this Biblical town to permit pupils and teachers from surrounding villages to reach schools here.

"It's a matter of principle," said Mayor Nasser Hanna in explaining the decision to reject an Israeli army proposal to provide pupils and teachers with special passes to enter the town for the new school year which opened Saturday.

"These are Palestinian lands, we cannot ask permission to move around in our own home," said Mr. Hanna, explaining that acquiescing to the army's proposal would have amounted to condoning Israel's closure policy.

"The effect on the schools has been disastrous, students and teachers are unable to move between villages to get to their classes and many, many students were missing because of this yesterday," he said.

Meanwhile about 150 people, including Christian cler-

ics, held a demonstration against the closure Sunday outside the Church of the Nativity, built according to Christian tradition over the birthplace of Christ.

Israel sealed off Bethlehem and other Palestinian-run cities on the West Bank as part of sanctions imposed after a double suicide bombing in Jerusalem on July 30 which killed 14 people plus the attackers.

The so-called "internal closure" around the other West Bank self-rule towns has been lifted but Bethlehem remains sealed, preventing most Palestinians from entering or leaving and keeping away all but a handful of the Christian pilgrims who provide key support to the local economy.

Israel defends the tougher measures here by saying they suspect the Jerusalem bombing was planned and directed from this area, where Palestinian police in July uncovered a bomb-making laboratory belonging to the radical Islamic group Hamas.

But Palestinian officials charge the closure has no

security implications and is a punitive economic sanction designed to pressure the Palestinian leadership to take more severe measures against militants.

"I see no reason why this siege should continue and why these holy places should be closed to pilgrims," said Mr. Hanna, who added that tourism-related activities had seen a 95 per cent drop in business.

"The closure has severely hit all economic sectors in the

town," he said. Salah Tamari, an elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council from Bethlehem, added angrily, "2000 years after the birth of Christ, Bethlehem is being crucified."

A protest march against the closure here Saturday degenerated into several hours of sporadic clashes between stone-throwing youths and Israeli troops posted around a Jewish holy site on the edge of Bethlehem.

Israeli officer beats bedouin soldier, calls him 'dog'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The bedouin community erupted angrily Sunday over reports an Israeli army officer hit a bedouin soldier, called him "Bedouin dog" and doused him in oil and hot pepper. "We view this very seriously," bedouin and former career officer Hassan Al Heb told Israeli Radio. "Such people have no place in the army. This will definitely affect bedouin recruitment into the army." The accused officer reportedly broke into the soldier's room, beat him, dragged him around the room, poured various substances on him and said "you piece of bedouin, you're a bedouin dog," the radio reported. An army spokesman responded that the matter was being investigated and "if there was any unacceptable behaviour, it will be dealt with." Around 85,000 bedouins live in the Negev, of whom more than half live in tents, and another 38,000 live in the north of Israel.

Closure-struck Bethlehem a microcosm for deadlocked Mideast peace process

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Strangled by over three weeks of Israeli closure, Bethlehem has become a microcosm for the broken-down Israeli-Palestinian peace process, where threats have replaced cooperation and hope has given way to desperation.

The Israeli army siege on Bethlehem and its surroundings entered its 25th day Sunday, the most visible sign of the test of wills between Israeli and Palestinian leaders who blame each other for the deadlock in the peace process.

Bethlehem is at the focal point of Israeli complaints that the Palestinians have not done enough to fight terrorism, and of Palestinian protests that Israel is strangling them with unfair sanctions imposed after a July 30 double suicide bombing in Jerusalem.

Residents here said the deadlock was grinding down their remaining faith in a peace process from which they, perhaps more than other West Bank towns, had hoped to reap economic benefits due to the city's Christian holy sites and proximity to Jerusalem.

What is left is growing anger and despair. Only some 150 people gathered Thursday outside Bethlehem's main tourist site, the Church of the Nativity built where tradition says Jesus was born, to hear speeches protesting the continuing army blockade.

"This is just talk by politicians that does no one any good," said Issa Talhami, who worked in a Bethlehem hotel until the fifth day of the closure when his boss told him to go home because there were no guests. "Things must break at some point. Either we call off the Oslo [self-rule] accords and let everything fall where it may, or the world pressures Israel to stop what it is doing," Mr. Talhami, 26, told Agence France Presse.

The Israeli army siege bars nearly all movement in and out of Bethlehem and each of its surrounding villages, an

"internal seal" which has already been lifted from all other West Bank cities.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has maintained a security seal around the West Bank and Gaza Strip and has refused to hand over millions of dollars to the cash-strapped Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Israel justifies the harsher measures on Bethlehem by saying they believe the Jerusalem attack, which killed 14 Israelis, was planned and executed from near the city, where Palestinian police forces uncovered a Hamas bomb factory in July.

Mr. Netanyahu slammed Mr. Arafat Saturday for meeting with Islamist groups last week in "national unity talks" which the Palestinians said were aimed at shoring up the PNA's popular support in the face of Israeli policies.

"Arafat doesn't fight terror and then bugs the leaders of terror," Mr. Netanyahu told U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in a phone call, Israel Radio said. Israeli officials also said Friday they were "deeply disappointed" by Mr. Arafat's refusal so far to arrest Islamists or move to dismantle armed militant groups.

After the U.S. also chided him for meeting with Hamas, Mr. Arafat insisted Saturday that he is "in favour of security cooperation with the participation of both sides, Palestinian and Israeli."

But at the same time he called on Palestinians to create defence committees in the event that Israeli-Palestinian relations take a turn for the worse.

"Israel is using security as an excuse to place obstacles in the way of returning the peace process to its track," he said.

His views appear widely shared by Palestinians who have little or no trust in Mr. Netanyahu's intentions.

"More and more people are saying they want war," said a prominent Bethlehem restaurateur, whose establishment, once frequented by Palesti-



An Israeli soldier on Saturday fires a tear-gas grenade at Palestinian stone-throwers in Bethlehem. Some 300 Palestinians protested against what they called 'internal closure' that Israel has kept on Bethlehem since the July 30 bombing of a Jerusalem market (Reuters photo)

ans, Israelis and tourists alike, stood empty Sunday.

"They say Netanyahu will never allow peace. Of course Israel would win a war, but

we have to break this deadlock," he said.

"Up until now, people here thought Arafat was doing a good job. But now they won-

der if this is the right way. People are even starting to say that maybe [His Majesty] King Hussein might be better," he added.

Iraq again calls for closer ties with Syria

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq called for closer ties with its former foe Syria, saying they would benefit all Arab countries, as a Syrian trade delegation visited Baghdad on Sunday.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Sahhaf met the Syrian delegation and stressed "the importance of strengthening relations between the two brother countries in all areas, in the interests of the Arab Nation," according to the Iraqi News Agency.

Mohammad Malki, head of the 12-strong Syrian delegation, told Mr. Sahhaf of the "determination of Syrian businessmen to consolidate economic relations with our Iraqi brothers."

Mr. Malki, director of the Syrian Union of Chambers of Commerce, added that Syria "is ready to supply Iraq with all its needs in line with U.N. accords."

A U.N. "oil-for-food" accord allows Iraq to sell \$2 billion of oil every six months to finance purchases of food and medicine, under the first easing of international sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The U.N. Sanctions Committee has authorised Iraq to import humanitarian goods through its border with Syria.

Iraq and Syria, ruled by rival branches of the Baath Arab Socialist Party, broke off ties in 1980 and closed

their border two years later. However, a delegation of Syrian businessmen travelled to Baghdad three months ago to break the ice, since when the two countries signed contracts with each other for the first time since 1980.

The Iraqi-Syrian border reopened in June to businessmen. Traders and industrialists from the two countries have since exchanged several visits.

The influential Babel newspaper, run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, called Saturday for closer Iraqi-Syrian ties to counter growing military cooperation between Israel and Turkey.

Iraq exports 13.5m barrels in eight days

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq has exported more than 13 million barrels of crude since it resumed oil sales eight days ago under its oil-for-food deal with the United Nations, Iraqi newspapers said Sunday.

"Over the last eight days since Iraqi crude started flowing for the second six months of the oil deal some 13.5 million barrels have been marketed," Al Qadisiya newspaper said.

It said the amount was exported via the Turkish Ceyhan port and Iraq's Mina Al-Bakr oil terminal in the Gulf.

Iraq resumed limited oil sales last week under the oil-for-food deal which allows Baghdad to sell \$2 billion worth of oil over six months in exchange for food and medicines to meet needs of Iraqis, hard-hit by U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Sales must be divided into two equal 90-day periods. After a two-month delay waiting for a revised distribution plan, Baghdad has few days to try to reach its interim \$1 billion target by Sept. 5.

Iraq said it could meet that target and its Oil Minister Amir Mohammad Rashid put Iraq's current oil export capacity at 1.8 million barrels per day.

Iraqi News Agency said on Sunday that a third supertanker docked at Mina Al Bakr to be laden with 2.5 million barrels of Iraqi crude.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man jailed for 21 years for raping 2 boys

DUBAI (AFP) — Dubai criminal court has jailed a stateless Arab for 21 years for raping two boys aged 11 and four, the Gulf News daily reported Sunday. Ahmad Haidar Abdullah, 32, was under the influence of drugs when he committed the crime in March, the paper said without giving a date for the court verdict.

UAE child killed in swing gallows

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A nine-year-old Emirati girl was strangled after her neck was caught in a rope loop as she was playing on a swing in this Gulf country, newspapers reported Sunday. Mariam Rashid Abdullah was rushed to hospital but died on arrival, doctors said. Her family said she was playing alone with her swing when the rope tightened around her neck. Police are investigating the incident in the United Arab Emirates northern port of Fujairah.

Saudis warned against bogus companies

RIYADH (AFP) — The Saudi commerce ministry warned its nationals Sunday to beware of bogus foreign companies trying to con them into parting with their money. A ministry statement said that "bogus foreign companies operating outside the kingdom recently sent Saudi citizens letters telling them they had won prizes of money, gold or diamonds. These companies ask citizens to pay a sum of money to receive their prizes," the ministry added, urging Saudis to be on their guard.

Turkey detains 27 illegal immigrants

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish authorities on Sunday detained 27 people, mainly Iraqis, trying to enter neighbouring Greece illegally, the Anatolia News Agency (ANA) reported. The illegal immigrants, including 25 Iraqis and two Iranians, were found inside the depot of a large truck on the Ipsala border gate, 200 kilometres west of Istanbul, ANA said. Two Turkish refugee smugglers, including the truck's driver, were arrested. The illegal immigrants were understood to have been seeking asylum in Greece or elsewhere in western Europe mainly to flee economic hardships in their home countries, ANA added. In recent years, thousands of people fleeing mainly Iraq and developing Asian countries have been using Turkey as an intermediate country to infiltrate into Greece.

Iran to round up, expel illegal workers

TEHRAN (R) — Iran is to clamp down and deport foreigners working illegally in Tehran province, an Iranian newspaper reported Sunday. "Illegal foreign citizens will be identified, gathered in camps and then deported," the Jomhuri Islami daily quoted a political and security deputy to Tehran province's governor as saying. Hassan Shirazi said the action would take place soon. The measure is expected to mostly affect migrants from war-torn Afghanistan as well as workers from the Indian subcontinent and Central Asian states. Iran's government has estimated there are some 1.4 million refugees in the country.

UAE stops licences for new foreign lawyers

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has stopped issuing licences for new foreign lawyers and given expatriate solicitors already registered in the Gulf country only six more years to practise their profession.

The move is a prelude to a total nationalisation of the legal profession as part of an overall plan to replace the large foreign workforce with natives.

A new law published in the official gazette stipulates that all foreign lawyers must

operate through an office owned by a national lawyer for an initial two years from the date of the publication of the law this week.

The period may be extended by the federal cabinet for another two years, and then again for a final two-year period.

But lawyers who were not registered before the law was drafted on December 23 will not be allowed to practise the profession in the UAE.

The new law was endorsed by UAE President

Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan last month and lawyers said it took effect last week.

"New lawyers seeking jobs in the UAE will no longer be granted licences," a UAE lawyer said. "This will give a chance to national lawyers to work."

Hundreds of foreign lawyers, mainly from Egypt, Sudan and Syria, work in the UAE, where expatriates account for more than two thirds of the 2.4 million population and 90 per cent of the 900,000-strong work-

force.

The UAE, a major OPEC oil producer, has launched a drive to nationalise jobs to ease reliance on foreign labour and ensure work for its people following a surge in graduates from universities and other educational institutions.

The UAE decided last year to ban foreign lawyers from appearing in courts but it retracted that decision to give nationals more time for training.

"That decision was implemented briefly as it created a

gap in the legal process. The new law gives six years to foreign lawyers and I think this period is enough for local lawyers to fill the gap," an Egyptian lawyer said.

Foreigners began streaming into the UAE and other Gulf states some three decades ago, when they launched one of the biggest construction drives in modern history to build their infrastructure.

The drive was financed by oil export earnings that turned the desert region into one of the richest areas.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Cartoons
15:00Gillette Sports Special
15:30Deep Water Haven
16:00Animal Show
16:30Ocean Girl
17:15French Programmes
19:00News in French
19:30News Headline
19:35Neighbours
20:00Comedy — Murphy
Brown
20:30Babylon 5
21:10Highlander
22:00News in English
22:35Emergency Room
23:15Homicide

PRAYER TIMES

04:39Fajr
06:01(Sunrise) Dhuha
12:38Dhuhr
16:15Asr
19:14Maghreb
20:36Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./Max. temp.

Amman20/30
Aqaba26/39
Deserts18/34
Jordan Valley24/38

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 33, Aqaba 41 Humidity
readings: Amman 31 per cent,
Aqaba 29 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tustug757253
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi893542
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim830432
Dr. Bahjat Bader832642
Firas pharmacy661912
Perdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh250080
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan995743
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Dept.630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
J. Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Co.636381
RJ Flight Information08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Luzmila630195

Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity644281/6
Akileh Maternity642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali666126/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muasher777101/3
Al-Bashir775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Jeddah (RJ)09:45
New Delhi (RJ)09:45
Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)11:55
Beirut (RJ)15:25
Kuwait (RJ)17:15
London (RJ)17:30
New York, Amsterdam (RJ)19:00
Bangkok (RJ)19:30
Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)19:55
Milan (RJ)22:55
Kuwait (add) (RJ)04:10
Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:50Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)
08:05Damascus (RJ)
08:05Sanaa (RJ)
08:35Brussels (add) (RJ)
09:30Jeddah (RJ)
09:45New Delhi (RJ)
10:20Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:55Beirut (RJ)
15:25Kuwait (RJ)
17:15Cairo (RJ)
17:30London (RJ)
17:40New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:00Bangkok (RJ)
19:30Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
19:55Milan (RJ)
22:55Kuwait (add) (RJ)
04:10Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

13:45Khartoum (SD)
14:10Muscat, Bahrain (GF)
14:10Muscat, Bahrain (GF)
15:05Vienna (OS)
16:50Doha (QR)
19:50Tel Aviv (LY)
20:15Dubai (EK)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:10Beirut (ME)
22:15Cairo (MS)
23:30Athens (OA)
01:20Amsterdam, Damascus (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:05Tel Aviv (LY)
08:25Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:15Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
10:50Aqaba (RW)
12:10Amman (QAIA) (RW)
13:00Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
22:20Aqaba (RW)
23:50Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:35Beirut (RJ)
09:40Kuwait (RJ)
10:45Milan (RJ)
11:55Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
13:25London (RJ)

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15:00Khartoum (SD)
15:50Vienna (OS)
17:50Doha (QR)
21:10Tel Aviv (LY)
23:15Cairo (MS)
23:55Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:30Amsterdam (KL)
04:00Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW)
06:30Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
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Home & Middle East News
Jordan Times, Monday, August 25, 1997
Rana Hussein
Police Sun-
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Bogus antiquities dealers arrested

By Rama Hassel
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police Sunday warned people not to buy gold or "ancient" artefacts from unauthorised or unlicensed dealers or from street peddlers after arresting two people in Russeifah Saturday, who reportedly were attempting to peddle forged gold antique statues to several individuals in the Zarqa area.

According to police officials, the two suspects, aged 44 and 32, both residents of Zarqa with previous criminal records, were soliciting wealthy Arabs and foreigners with claims that they owned ancient golden pieces and were offering them for sale.

"This is not the first time such an incident occurs, and we urge people to stay away from street peddlers and to resort to gold and antique shops instead to avoid being defrauded,"

said Director of the Criminal Department at the Public Security Department (PSD) Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Qhah.

Lt. Col. Qhah said the two men were arrested after a man and a woman in Zarqa reported to police last week that they were defrauded of JD16,000 by two men.

The two suspects showed the buyers what they claimed were samples of "ancient gold pieces" and said they had 100 more pieces for sale for the amount of JD 16,000, the police official continued.

"After the buyers examined a few pieces and found them to be genuine," he said, "they (the suspects) promised to return with the remaining 100 pieces after receiving JD16,000 for the entire purchase."

"But the two men took the money and have not returned since to deliver the remainder of the purchase,"

Lt. Col. Qhah told the Jordan Times.

Based on the buyers' description of the two suspects, police located them, sent an agent posing as a buyer, and caught the men attempting to sell two gold-plated statues, he added.

According to the police official, the two men confessed and said they were targeting foreigners and Arabs from Gulf countries.

Meanwhile, in other incidents in the Kingdom, a 20-year-old man was killed on the Aqaba highway after a crude-oil tank truck he was driving rolled over and burst into flames, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

The victim, Mahdi Saleh, an Iraqi national, was speeding and lost control of the vehicle.

PSD statistics of 1996 indicate that 29 people were killed and 314 injured in 515 collision accidents involving tank trucks.

'New vocational training programme planned'

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) and the Jordan Armed Forces, will implement a national vocational training programme, beginning with the 1997-1998 school year, according to Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri.

During a press conference, the minister said the plan, which is a translation of ideas and directives by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, is designed to offer new opportunities to students who have completed secondary education, but have not been able to enrol at universities.

The programme offers these students vocational training enabling them to gain employment or pursue

higher vocational training at the country's universities, according to Dr. Masri.

Students in this one-year programme, which will be complementary to the training programmes run by the VTC, are not required to have passed the tawjihi (general secondary school) examinations, he said.

Training will be conducted at the ministry's various vocational centres, which offer training in 44 specialisations connected to industry, agriculture, commerce, nursing, hotel management, and home economics, he explained.

The fee for the programme is JD 106, which is equal to the amount paid by a student repeating the top secondary class, he concluded.



Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri Sunday reviews plans for a new cooperative plan for a vocational training programme (Petra photo)

Public administration institute to assist Palestinian health ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Sunday signed a protocol on cooperation between the Jordanian Institute of Public Administration (IPA) and the Palestine Health Ministry.

Under the terms of the agreement, the IPA will provide administrative and financial training for cadres employed by the Palestine Health Ministry, and both agencies will exchange vis-

its by experts in the two fields.

The agreement stipulates that the IPA will train 12 health ministry employees, including two senior officials who will be offered training in advanced public administration.

The PNA will shoulder the expenses for travel and accommodation.

The signatories also agreed to exchange information concerning administration, legislation and

regulations, and to establish a joint committee to monitor the implementation of this protocol.

The programme entails training in computers, accountancy, and budget preparation, as well as management of stores and purchases.

The protocol was signed by the IPA Director General on behalf of Jordan, and by Dr. Ibrahim Abed of the Palestine Health Ministry for the PNA.

PSD symposium to tackle family protection, security

AMMAN (Petra) — A three-day symposium on family protection and security entitled "Towards a safe family by the year 2000" will be held at the Public Security Officers Club beginning Aug. 26.

The symposium, organised by the Public Security Department, aims to analyse various dangers facing women and children, the causes and motives of related crimes, while mobilising public opinion to prevent all threats against families.

Participants will discuss several working papers on crimes and attacks against women and children, child abuse, impact of drug addiction on family security, family disintegration and its impact on children and family members, and juvenile delinquency.

In addition, the role of national legislation in protecting families and children, and the role of media in safeguarding the security of the family and community are to be covered.

Members of the symposium will include experts from the Public Security Department (PSD) and the private and public sectors.

The PSD has recently established a special office in the Amman police department dealing with crimes related to children and women.

South Korea pledges \$16 million in loan support to Kingdom
Ambassador Oh ends 3-year tenure

AMMAN (Petra) — South Korea will give Jordan two soft loans totalling \$16 million in support of the Kingdom's economy and in appreciation of Jordan's peace efforts, South Korea's ambassador to Jordan Jung-II Oh said Sunday.

Speaking prior to his departure for home after completing his tour of duty, Mr. Oh said his country had given the Kingdom a \$1 million grant to finance feasibility studies on methods for disposing of or recycling waste water, and Seoul will soon present Jordan with a \$9 million grant to help finance the sewage project in the Madaba governorate.

Mr. Oh added that his country will also contribute to an estimated \$7 million sewage project in the northern town of Ramtha.

South Korean firms, in conjunction with local businesses, will be employed to carry out both projects, he explained.

Four major South Korean companies are currently involved in joint investment projects with Jordanian firms specialising in housing, irrigation, and industry, said the ambassador.

Commenting on cooperation in artistic fields, Mr. Oh noted that visiting folkloric troupes have already presented performances in the Kingdom's cultural centres and universities.

Tourism is at its initial stages, and although few tourist groups have visited Jordan, soon their numbers will increase, he continued.

He remarked that both countries have been organising training courses for personnel involved in the private and public sectors, adding that his country is ready to offer training to Jordanians in South Korea.

Mr. Oh expressed deep appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein for conferring on him the Jordanian Independence (Istiklal) Medal of the First Order, saying that this honour was in recognition of his endeavours to bolster ties between the two countries.

Mr. Oh, who has served as ambassador of South Korea since 1994, said South Korea will take part in the Doha Economic Summit in November in order to promote its ties with the Arab World.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

* Musical performance by Freddy for Music at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* "Umayyad Coinage of Bilad Al Sham" by Dr. Nayef Goussous at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 696682).

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Basem Al Mahdi at the Jordan Plastic Art Association Gallery, Jabal Weibdeh, until Sept. 8.

* Bani Hamida exhibition (rugs, cushions, runners, wall hangings and baskets) at the Al Baidar Hall of Kan Zaman, until Sept. 20.

* Islamic Bookbinding Exhibition at the British Council, Jabal Amman, until Aug. 31.

Swiss host 100th anniversary of birth of Zionism

(Continued from page 12)

and we also believe there is no causal link between Herzl's vision and the World War II," said Thomas Lyssy, vice-president of the Swiss Jewish federation.

But sharp words for Switzerland could come from Avraham Burg, the head of Israel's semi-official Jewish agency, who has accused Swiss banks of reacting too slowly to claims that they withheld assets from Holocaust survivors and heirs.

Mr. Burg is one of four speakers at the official ceremony on August 31, who include the speaker of the Israeli Knesset (parliament), Dan Tichon of the ruling Likud Party.

Mr. Lyssy said the surrounding publicity could help reinforce religious tolerance in Switzerland, which has seen outbreaks of anti-Semitism in reaction to criticism of the country's banks and government from world Jewish groups.

"If you look at the exhibition and the issues, you see that anti-Semitism and the inability of European countries to deal with their Jewish minorities was clearly a very strong reason for the development of Zionism," Mr. Lyssy told Reuters.

"If the non-Jewish population comes to grips with this issue, this could contribute to an understanding of how to get along with a minority and live peacefully together."

Anti-Semitism spurred Zionism hopes for a Jewish homeland — Zionism takes its name from a Jerusalem temple

mount — something frowned on in the 19th century by many Jews in liberal western Europe. But support grew with the spread of anti-Semitism.

In eastern Europe, where Jews in the last century remained segregated in ghettos, the terror of repeated pogroms reinforced the desire for a homeland.

Herzl wanted to forge Europe's disparate Zionist groups into one organisation and chose a refined gathering place in Basle, the Stadt casino banquet hall, to give the gathering an air of statehood.

Described by biographers as energetic, narcissistic and prone at times to depression, Herzl convinced more than 200 Jews from across Europe to come as delegates to the first congress of an organisation yet to be founded.

"Herzl had to carry off a giant bluff in Basle," Swiss journalist Pierre Heumann wrote in a recent German-language history of the first congress entitled "Israel Entstand in Basle" (Israel was created in Basle).

Herzl required delegates to wear formal top hats and tail coats for the opening and draped the hall with Zionist banners, blue-striped white flags decorated with the Star of David.

"I forced people into an attitude of stateliness and gave them the feeling they were a national assembly," Herzl wrote later.

The main product of the three-day congress was the so-called Basle programme, a five-paragraph tract that

became the basis of Zionism until the creation of Israel and which stated, "Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured under public law."

Asked during proceedings whether women delegates had a say, Herzl replied, "the ladies are of course very honoured guests but will not take part in the vote."

But women were given the vote at the second congress in Basle a year later.

Altogether the Zionist congresses convened 22 times, 10 of them in Basle, including the last one in December 1946.

Basle was chosen as the venue for the first gathering after the anti-Zionist Jewish community in Munich protested against hosting the congress there.

Herzl picked the industrial and university city on the Rhine — whose citizens in 1349 burned most of the city's Jewish residents to death on an island in the river — because of its modern reputation for tolerance and free speech.

Basle also had two points to recommend it over rival Zurich.

Zurich was a haunt of Russian revolutionaries and therefore also of the Czar's secret police, which could have kept the large Russian-Jewish delegation away in fear.

Basle's other strong point was described briefly in a letter to Herzl from his Swiss companion David Farstein.

"Good Jewish restaurant," Farstein wrote.

Majali, ministers look into housing needs
JD 1m contract for Abu Nuseir phase 5 signed

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday said the private sector should be invited to participate in the utilisation of state-owned land and become a strategic partner in the task of housing construction and other public services.

Speaking during a visit to the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC), Dr. Majali requested that a committee of representatives from the ministries of finance, water and irrigation, agriculture, and municipal and rural affairs, in addition to HUDC and the Lands and Survey Department, be created to survey the Kingdom's lands.

The committee should classify lands as intended for agriculture or housing, and submit its reports to the Council of Ministers as soon as possible, he said.

During a review of housing issues, Dr. Majali asked that concerned authorities seek an immediate solution for housing problems, including the issue of squatters who have illegally seized state-owned land.

HUDC Director General Yousef Hiyasat presented a briefing on the corporation's strategy, its housing programmes, and the land surveys it conducts, and promised that a general survey of the lands in the Amman, Balqa, and Zarqa regions will be completed within two weeks.

Commenting on the housing estates in Salt and Zarqa, he said these regions require an additional 650 housing units annually to accommodate population growth.

Also Sunday the HUDC awarded a tender to a local firm to carry out the JD 1 million fifth phase of the housing estate at the Abu Nuseir district north-west of Amman.

The firm will divide 313 dunums of land into

426 plots to be used for housing units and a shopping centre, Mr. Hiyasat explained.

The two-year project also entails building 93,000 square metres of roads, water and sewage

networks, and canals to drain away rain water, he concluded.

Dr. Majali was accompanied on the visit by Deputy Prime Minister for Services and Minister of Administrative

Development Abdullah Ensur, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan, and Minister of Public Works and Housing Nasser Lawzi.



Housing and Urban Development Corporation Director Yousef Hiyasat (right) and a representative of a local construction firm Sunday sign a JD 1 million contract for the building of phase 5 of the Abu Nuseir community complex (Petra photo)

Police seize 27 kg of drugs, make several border arrests

AMMAN (Petra) — The Anti-narcotics Department Sunday announced the seizure of three kilograms of heroin and 24 kilograms of hashish in three separate drug cases this month at the northern border post of Ramtha.

Director Colonel Nazih Shreideh said a Jordanian vehicle returning from Damascus was thoroughly searched and found to be carrying eight kilograms of hashish.

After a three-week surveillance of suspected drug traffickers, department teams arrested three Jordanian citi-

zens in the process of delivering three kilograms of heroin to another party, according to Col. Shreideh.

Customs officials at the Ramtha border post also found 16 kilograms of hashish hidden in a secret compartment inside a vehicle bearing a non-Jordanian Arab licence plate, he said.

Two non-Jordanian Arabs were involved in the case, he added.

Col. Shreideh said all suspects involved in the drug trafficking operations have been apprehended and will face court trial.

Bani Hamida rugs go on display

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The historic village of Kan Zaman will host the second exhibition of Bani Hamida rugs, which is being organised by the Jordan Tourism Investment Company "Artizaman" and Jordan Society for Development (JSD), at Al Baidar hall starting today.

General Manager of Artizaman Huda Qasim said the exhibition will display rugs, cushions, runners, and wall hangings of various designs and colours schemes.

The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project is a cottage industry which currently involves 1,649 recently-settled bedouin women in 450 families, explained Bani Hamida's Project Manager and JSD Secretary of Board Natasha Shawarib.

The weaving project was started in late 1985 by Save the Children Federation, supported by Her Majesty Queen Noor, to promote and revive handicrafts in Jordan, while providing opportunities for families to increase their income, Ms. Shawarib said.

"In July 1996, Save the Children graduated the Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project into the JSD for long-term implementation," she added.

The women weavers had a strong input in setting up and developing the project, whose structure was continuously modified according to their suggestions as it expanded from one village to the next, Ms. Shawarib said.

Since the project first began, 1649 women in Bani Hamida Mountain have participated, receiving up to now a total of JD 1,018,037 in wages, she added.

The Kan Zaman exhibition is being held under the patronage of HRH Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan and sponsored by Nashashibi and Ebbini forms.

Kiev joins NATO exercises; keen not to offend Moscow

DONUZLAV, Ukraine (R) — As Ukraine's navy spruced up this Soviet-era base for this week's Sea Breeze 97 exercises with NATO and other forces, officials were trying to limit the potential damage to relations with Moscow.

The event, a mock-up humanitarian operation rather than a combat mission, has annoyed Russia because it is being held with NATO and, in part, on Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, where 75 per cent of the population is ethnic Russian.

Furthermore, local people say the exercises — which bring together U.S., Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Georgian and Ukrainian ships — could harm the lucrative tourist trade.

Officials disagree, and seem to have gone to some lengths to tone down the operation to avoid a rift with the Russians.

"These exercises aim to improve the life and health of the people," Ukrainian Defence Minister Olexander Kuzmuk said last week.

"There should be no impact on the tourist season because ships cannot be seen

from the beaches."

Colonel Borys Rekuts, a Donuzlav Base commander, explained in an interview the idea behind the exercise: "It's the Orange Republic and it's had an earthquake and we're trying to bring humanitarian aid to help people."

The Ukrainian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Colonel-General Olexander Zatulko, said last week Ukraine would hold joint military exercises with Russia in Crimea in October.

"It's clear that Ukraine wants to maintain a balance between Russia and the West," said Serhiy Zgurets, a military commentator at the influential Den daily.

The Ukrainian Defence Ministry sent Sea Breeze invitations to the Russian Black Sea Fleet based, under a 20-year leasing deal between Kiev and Moscow, not far from Donuzlav.

Moscow agreed to send observers only last week, after rejecting not just the invitation but the very idea of exercises with NATO involvement in Crimea, where three quarters of the population is ethnic Russian

and which for centuries was the subject of rivalry between Russia, Turkey, Britain and France.

"Russia still does not agree with the idea of holding the exercises and has no plans to participate in them," Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesman Valery Nesterushkin told Interfax News Agency last week.

"Crimea is a mountain of difficult memories. Everything here is historically very sensitive," Leonid Grach, leader of Crimea's Communist Party, told Reuters.

"It's better not to touch the past and not to hold these exercises," added Mr. Grach, whose party has headed the campaign of public opposition to Sea Breeze.

The area saw bloody battles during Germany's World War II occupation. In the 1950s, Kremlin leader, Nikita Khrushchev ceded Crimea from Russia to the then-Soviet Republic of Ukraine.

Communists in Crimea plan a march Monday from a monument devoted to the Red Army attack of

Yevpatoria in 1944 to the city centre where a rally is planned near the Lenin Monument.

Russia objects to NATO's eastward enlargement — although Ukraine has no plans to join the alliance for now — and views the exercises as a precursor to a NATO presence in Crimea, a strategic location jutting into the Black Sea.

Ukraine has been an enthusiastic participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme of military cooperation.

Originally, Ukrainian Foreign and Defence Ministry statements said the exercises were to be only in Crimea.

But the timetable showed this was changed. Only sports events and ceremonies marking six years of Ukraine's independence were being held in Donuzlav Sunday after the arrival of foreign vessels Saturday.

On Monday, the ships will travel some 200 kilometres from Crimea to the southern Mykolayiv region and then to the port of Odessa where the exercises will take place.



Opposition activists run for cover as tear gas fired by police fill the air during a general strike in Dhaka Sunday. The strike was called by main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and supported by other opposition groups to protest against recent rises in fuel prices (Reuters photo)

Scores hurt in Bangladesh strike violence

DHAKA (R) — Police used batons and tear gas in running battles with opposition activists during a country-wide general strike that kept transport off the streets and shut businesses across Bangladesh Sunday, witnesses said.

Clashes erupted in the capital Dhaka and its suburbs after activists exploded dozens of home-made bombs to scare away the few people who ventured on the streets.

Witnesses said up to 50 people were injured, including a newspaper photographer who was hit by a tear gas shell and was rushed to hospital in critical condition.

Police arrested nearly 20 activists, they said.

The day-long strike was called by Begum Khaleda Zia, chief of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist

Party (BNP), to protest against a recent increase in fuel prices. It has been supported by several right-wing parties, including the Jamaat-e-Islami Party.

In Dhaka and the main port city of Chittagong, there was no transport on the streets except for a few rickshaws. Trains did not leave their stations or were halted by pro-strike activists on their way. Only a few ferries sailed off before dawn.

Offices, shops and schools were all closed, witnesses said.

The strike also gripped other major towns in the country, police said.

The country's two stock exchanges in Dhaka and Chittagong were closed. Work in the Chittagong Port were mostly suspended, port officials said.

On Tuesday the govern-

ment raised prices per litre of unleaded petrol to 23 taka from 14.65, leaded petrol to 21 taka from 13.7, and diesel to 12.95 from 12.7.

In response, Ms. Khaleda called for a countrywide strike and warned the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of "dire consequences" if it did not lower fuel prices.

The ruling Awami League said the BNP was using the fuel hike as a "pretext to intensify its anti-government campaign and mobilise rightist forces under its banner."

Ms. Khaleda left for Pakistan Saturday on her way to the United States, where she would spend two weeks meeting her followers and BNP supporters, party sources said.

The government said the price hike was necessary, among other reasons, to ref-

lect the decline of the country's currency, the taka, against the U.S. dollar.

Government officials said the impact of higher fuel prices would affect only a small proportion of the population with cars and minibuses. Other vehicles including lorries and buses would be virtually unaffected because they use diesel.

Authorities had reinforced security in Dhaka by deploying hundreds of extra police and paramilitary troops.

"We have been directed to protect people and public property," one police officer said.

Thousands of BNP activists marching in Dhaka Saturday night described the strike as the "beginning of the downfall of the anti-people government" of Sheikh Hasina, who took office in June 1996.

Zambian police open fire, injure former president

President tried to kill me, Kaunda says

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Zambia's former president, Kenneth Kaunda, said Sunday his successor was trying to have him killed when police shot and wounded him over the weekend.

The 73-year-old "father of the nation," who led Zambia from independence in 1964 until 1991, accused riot police, sent out in force, of using tear gas to break up a peaceful opposition gathering and opening fire on his car as he tried to flee.

Mr. Kaunda said a bullet whizzed over him, grazing the top of his head, while another bullet hit his passenger Roger Chongwe, leader of an allied opposition party, in the face, badly wounding him. But Mr. Chongwe had also been discharged from the hospital after surgery.

No official version of the incident Saturday in the central Zambian town of Kabwe was immediately available, but Mr. Kaunda said his foe, President Frederick Chiluba, was behind it.

"It was an assassination attempt. There is no doubt in my mind about that," he told Reuters in a telephone interview after returning to his home in the capital Lusaka overnight.

"Chiluba is trying to sort us out. They realise we had gained a lot of support through a series of recent rallies. They were all peaceful until the police turned up," he said.

Mr. Kaunda also said he believed that the orders for police to use live ammunition — for the first time in several years of opposition protest at Mr. Chiluba's rule — had come straight from the president, who is away on a visit to Indonesia.

Animosity between Zambia's two post-independence leaders grew when Mr. Chiluba, elected on a pro-democracy platform in 1991's all-party elections, changed the law ahead of last year's poll to stop Mr.

Kaunda standing because his parents were not Zambian.

Mr. Kaunda's United National Independence Party has since led an opposition boycott and has pursued a campaign of civil disobedience against the government of Mr. Chiluba's movement for multiparty democracy.

Police clashed with market stall holders in Lusaka earlier this month in riots the authorities blamed on Mr. Kaunda.

The veteran African leader, during whose rule the economy of the copper-rich former British colony of Northern Rhodesia, crumbled and foreign debt spiralled, said he still preferred peaceful protest, if possible.

"It's up to them (the state) if they want to provoke people. We are still stressing the power of peaceful demonstrations to all our followers," he said.

There were no reports of demonstrations or violence Sunday, which Mr. Kaunda said he would spend with supporters to work out their next move.

"I cannot give up my fight for the rights of the Zambian people," he said.

UNIP, whose level of support is hard to gauge, demands the striking of the law barring Mr. Kaunda from standing for president, fresh elections and an end to what it says is government control of the media and judiciary.

So far its protests have fallen on deaf ears and even foreign aid donors, who cut off aid to Zambia in protest at Mr. Chiluba's electoral moves, said last month they would resume balance of payments support to ease the debt interest burden.

Finance Minister Ronald Penza said the World Bank had released \$70 million in support in August.

Mr. Kaunda urged donors to rethink after Saturday's incident.

Clashes heard in Brazzaville as refugees flee violence

KINSHASA (AFP) — Heavy weapons fire could be heard Sunday in the Congolese capital Brazzaville as hundreds of refugees from the city continued to flee across the Congo River to safety.

According to the U.N. refugee agency, more than 20,000 Congolese have arrived in Kinshasa from neighbouring Congo where rival forces of former strongman, Denis Sassou Nguesso and government troops have clashed since late Saturday.

Some of the refugees have gone to a camp some 30 kilometres east of Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said. Others have been taken in by friends or family in Kinshasa.

The weekend clashes came after a week in which state radio claimed that forces backing President Pascal Lissouba had wrested control of northern parts of the capital Brazzaville from Sassou Nguesso's militia.

Mr. Sassou Nguesso has denied the claim.

Meanwhile Saturday, the government military commander in Congo's second largest city, the port of Pointe Noire, warned that "Congolese and foreigners in the service of evil forces" were preparing to launch a civil war in the port at the end of August when Mr. Lissouba's mandate runs out.

In a government radio statement, Colonel Georges Lombe called on a popular mobilisation to defend the town.

So far, Pointe Noire has been unaffected by the ongoing rivalry between Mr. Sassou Nguesso and Mr. Lissouba, though the battle for control of Congo has spread to the north of the country.

refugees were systematically killed by Mr. Kabila's troops or their Rwandan Tutsi allies.

The refugees were among the rump of over one million Hutus who fled to Zaire fearing reprisals for the 1994 genocide by Hutu hardliners of minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates in Rwanda.

U.N.'s massacre investigation team arrives in former Zaire

KINSHASA (R) — A much delayed U.N. mission arrived in Kinshasa Sunday in search of evidence of massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees in what aid workers say were killing fields in the former Zaire.

But a spokeswoman for the team said a number of issues remained to be settled with President Laurent Kabila's government before the investigators could begin field work.

"We are here and this is already a major accomplishment but there are still several things that need to be clarified with the government," Myriam Dassa-Bles told reporters in the capital of the renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The 23-member team, led by lawyer Atsu-Koffi Amega of Togo, hopes to visit the eastern regions of Kisangani and Kivu where aid officials believe many Hutu

President opens anti-smoking conference in cigarette-happy China

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin opened the 10th World Conference on Tobacco or Health here Sunday, calling on his cigarette-happy populace to focus on health and environment as the economy takes off.

China has "a good growth rate" and is socially stable, Mr. Jiang said at the Great Hall of the People in a speech to some 1,800 participants from 103 countries and regions.

"We must now create an

environment favourable to life in the 21st century," he said.

Hiroshi Nakajima, director general of the World Health Organisation (WHO), also addressed the gathering, denouncing the millions spent by the tobacco lobby and calling for strict controls on the industry.

It is the first time the global anti-tobacco meeting is being held in a developing country.

"China was chosen as the venue because of the tobacco

problem in the country and its struggle to resist the ruthless efforts of an industry which has turned towards Asia and the world's other developing continents for profits as developed markets stagnate," the organisers said.

"One in three cigarettes smoked in the world today is smoked in China," they added.

According to official figures, there are nearly 320 million smokers in China — 300 million of them men — in a population of 1.29

billion. Organisers of the conference have vowed to reveal unpublished figures on the toll of death and disease wrought by tobacco worldwide and the "catastrophic scale" of the epidemic still to come.

The conference is being hosted by the Chinese Association on Smoking and Health and the Chinese Medical Association, under the auspices of several international bodies, including the WHO and the United Nations Children's

Fund. "It will be a landmark conference in turning the tide of disease caused by tobacco," said Professor Lu Rushan, the conference secretary-general.

"The death toll from tobacco will increase from three million to 10 million per annum in the coming two decades unless urgent action is taken to reduce tobacco consumption now," Mr. Lu said.

Chinese society traditionally frowns on women who smoke, although changing

attitudes in recent years have seen a sharp rise in the number of female teenage smokers.

As well as focusing on the physical risks, the increasingly vocal anti-smoking lobby in China has recently taken to debunking arguments that cigarette production and consumption comprise a key platform for the national economy.

While China earned 41 billion yuan (\$4.9 billion) in tax revenues from cigarette producers in 1993, the

economic loss through ill health in the same year was 65 billion yuan, making a net loss of 24 billion yuan.

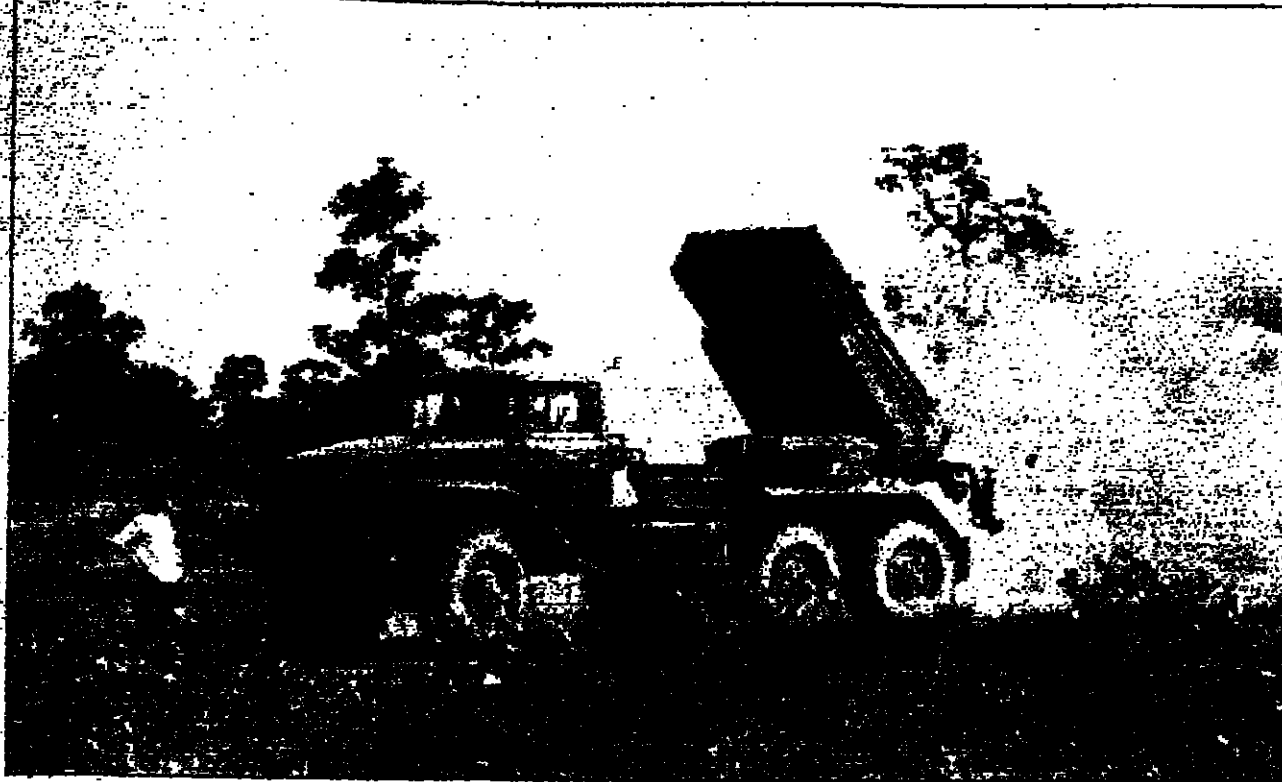
Four provinces and 70 cities in China recently banned smoking in public places, but light fines and a lack of enforcement have made for mixed results.

"China, like other developing countries, is facing a major catastrophe in the next few decades unless it succeeds in reducing the inexorable growth in cigarette sales," Mr. Lu said.

Women and young girls

have been particularly targeted by the tobacco industry, which is always more than willing to put money into sports and arts events, he said.

The conference, which runs until Aug. 28, will look at the growing use of tobacco in developing countries and among women as well as landmark legal actions against the U.S. tobacco industry this year which saw one company, Liggett, break ranks and admit cigarettes cause cancer.



A Cambodian military multiple rocket launcher fires at royalist forces in O'Smach from their position on Route 68, 20 kilometres south of the front lines in northern Cambodia. Government troops under the command of powerful Second Prime Minister Hun Sen are fighting for full control over O'Smach, the last town held by retreating loyalists of ousted First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh (Renter photo)

Small group of Cambodian royalists cling to last bastion

CHONG CHOM (AFP) — A small group of Cambodian royalists clung fiercely to their last outpost Sunday after Phnom Penh's forces pushed to the gates of their hilltop redoubt. Thai military sources and witnesses said.

An AFP photographer here on the border opposite the besieged village of O'Smach saw about 60 soldiers loyal to ousted First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh firing from their backs to the border fence.

They were supported by two armoured personnel carriers, recoilless rifles, mortars, anti-aircraft guns and heavy artillery, firing almost point blank at the

approaches to the hilltop town and ridge line positions behind them.

"They are throwing everything they have at them," a witness said.

Metal flew over the heads of reporters on the Thai side of the border as Mr. Hun Sen's troops fired from the ridge line about 1.5 kilometres away and the base of the hill about 300-400 metres from the border.

The main forces of the resistance — about 2,000 soldiers from Prince Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC party supported by some 600-700 Khmer Rouge fighters — appeared to have slipped away overnight.

A Thai military source at a

district office in Kap Choeng, about 10 kilometres west of this border town, said that as of 5:00 p.m. heavy fighting continued with no sign of any imminent breakthrough. "The fighting could go on for several days... the minds of the soldiers are not into it," the source said.

But the royalists were pinned against the border here after soldiers loyal to Cambodia's strongman, Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, took the ridge line controlling the approaches to the town at about 2:00 p.m., witnesses said.

Mr. Hun Sen's troops, which ousted the prince last month, have been moving in

on O'Smach, the last symbol of royalist military power, amid intense battles for almost two weeks. The attackers launched a three-prong assault at about 10:30 a.m. Sunday, and a fierce battle ensued for the ridge about three hours later, witnesses said.

The one-road border town, set on a jungle-clad hill, is strategically very difficult to overrun given its commanding position and the rugged terrain, analysts have said. Mr. Hun Sen's men, however, outnumbered and are better armed than their beleaguered counterparts.

Li Peng seeks long-term partnership with Singapore

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Chinese Premier Li Peng arrived here Sunday on his first official visit to Singapore, calling for a "long-term, stable partnership" between the two countries into the 21st century.

Mr. Li said the rapidly growing relations between Asian giant China and this tiny island republic not only benefited both countries "but also (made) an important contribution to regional peace and stability."

The Chinese premier added in an arrival statement that Beijing would work with Singapore to "establish a long-term, stable partnership of good neighbourliness, mutual trust and cooperation geared towards the 21st century."

Mr. Li, who came here from the northern Malaysian island of Penang accompanied by his wife Zhu Lin and a large official and business delegation, was received at the airport by Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong.

He inspected a guard of honour and shook hands with members of the diplo-

matic corps and Singapore cabinet members.

Mr. Li, 68, whose entourage includes five ministers, said he would have in-depth talks with Mr. Goh, 55, and other Singaporean leaders on "bilateral relations and regional and international issues of common interest."

He hoped the visit would promote the "development of our friendly relations and mutually-beneficial cooperation in depth and in breadth."

Mr. Li begins the official part of his visit Monday with a courtesy call on President Ong Teng Cheong. He will have talks with Mr. Goh, followed by a full-delegation meeting chaired by the two premiers.

Mr. Goh, who last visited China in April when he extended an invitation to Mr. Li to visit Singapore, will host a banquet in his honour Monday night.

A Singapore Foreign Ministry statement said the talks between Mr. Li and Mr. Goh will include "a range of international and regional issues and explore new areas of bilateral coop-

eration."

Trade and investment ties are expected to occupy centre stage during the trip, Mr. Li's first to this predominantly ethnic-Chinese island of three million people since diplomatic relations were established in 1990.

The Chinese premier, whose term of office expires next year, will address the Singapore business community Tuesday. The Straits Times newspaper said an agreement on civil aviation was expected to be signed during the trip.

Economic ties have grown rapidly since the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Singapore is the fifth largest foreign investors in China with cumulative investments of 21.6 billion Singapore dollars (\$14.4 billion) at the end of last year. Bilateral trade in 1996 reached 11.04 billion Singapore dollars.

Singapore is developing a massive industrial park in Suzhou near China's commercial capital Shanghai which has attracted more than \$2.5 billion in foreign

investment commitments.

Total investments in the park are targeted to reach \$30 billion when the project is fully developed over 15-20 years.

Mr. Li's visit here follows a four-day trip to Malaysia, where he held talks with Malaysian Premier Mahathir Mohammad, pledged to seek a peaceful solution to the Spratly Islands dispute and pressed for joint economic development.

The Chinese premier said an "appropriate solution" to the Spratly dispute was vital to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Scattered across the South China Sea, the Spratly is a chain of islets, reefs and shoals claimed partly or entirely by China, Taiwan and four South East Asian nations — Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Mr. Li will meet with Singapore's elder statesman, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who is known to be close to the Beijing leadership, before returning home Tuesday.

54 reported killed in gunbattles on Indo-Pakistan border in Kashmir

JAMMU (AFP) — Fifty-four Indian and Pakistani soldiers were killed as the two armies were locked Sunday in one of the heaviest battles on their disputed Kashmir border, Indian officials said.

A military spokesman here said 51 Pakistani troops were killed and 45 others wounded when the Indian army retaliated after gun battles broke out Saturday evening.

The spokesman said the Indian army had lost three men, including a major, and suffered six wounded.

"The fighting is still continuing," he said.

In Islamabad, Pakistani Defence Ministry officials, however, vehemently denied Indian military reports. "No exchange of fire has taken place in the past two, three days in Uri and Kargil sectors," as claimed by Indian officials, a Defence Ministry spokesman here said.

The Indian spokesman, however, maintained that clashes had in fact taken place.

"Our troops can watch... Pakistani soldiers carrying their dead and wounded," he told AFP in Jammu, Kashmir's winter capital. "We could not be a mute spectator to unprovoked firing by Pakistan."

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said fighting, mainly with small arms, was raging at eight places.

Indian officials said the worst fighting involving heavy artillery was going on at Uri, some 400 kilometres northwest of Jammu, as well as Kargil, about 500 kilometres northeast of here.

India and Pakistan dispute the ownership of Kashmir, a picturesque Himalayan region, and each hold parts of the state. The two neighbours, who have fought three wars since their inde-

pendence from Britain in 1947, share a 1,200-kilometre border in Kashmir.

A Muslim separatist campaign raging since 1989 in the Indian state of Kashmir has claimed more than 20,000 lives. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the militants. Pakistan denies the charge.

An Indian army spokesman in New Delhi confirmed there was "a tremendous upsurge" in firing by Pakistani troops on Indian positions, but added he had no information about casualties.

"(While) small arms fire is directed very often by Pakistani troops towards us, artillery has been used in the past 48 hours by them," he said.

"They have fired 500 (artillery) rounds, besides many, many thousands of small arms fire."

Indian and Pakistani troops along the Kashmir

border regularly exchange fire and had been firing at each other's positions in Uri for almost a week.

The latest fighting was the worst since April when three Indian civilians were killed in Pakistani attacks.

Pakistani forces reportedly began firing around 3:00 p.m. (0930 GMT) Saturday along the hilly border terrain.

"The Pakistanis resorted to artillery fire and pounded our positions with mortars," a military source said. "They also used heavy machine guns."

"We retaliated with artillery. We really gave them hell."

India and Pakistan resumed dialogue between their foreign secretaries in March after a break of more than three years. A second meeting took place in June in Islamabad and a third is due in September in New Delhi.

British minister blows her top over Montserrat

LONDON (R) — Britain's Minister for international development accused Montserrat leaders of "hysterical scare mongering" in an escalating row over British help for the volcano-stricken Caribbean island.

Clare Short, in remarks to the Observer newspaper published Sunday, said there would be no improvement in the offer of £2,500 (\$4,020) per adult to help Montserratians relocate to Britain or elsewhere in the Caribbean.

And she said she was so angered by the attitude of the island's leaders that her junior minister might even cancel a planned visit to Montserrat this week.

"If they play these silly political games there will be no point in holding talks," she was quoted by the newspaper as saying.

She accused the island's colonial government of talking "mad money" in its requests for more help from London, saying that the cash offered represented six months' average wages on the island.

Montserrat had asked Britain to offer heads of households about \$14,800 and dependent children \$7,400.

Chief Minister Bertrand Osborne resigned abruptly Thursday amid criticism of his handling of the crisis and the level of aid being offered by Britain.

"They say 10,000, double, treble, then think of another number. It will be golden elephants next," Ms. Short said.

"They have got to stop this game. It is bad governance. It's hysterical scare mongering, which is whipping people up."

Ms. Short said Britain had already given £40 million in aid to Montserrat over the past two years and a further £10.5 million had been set aside for the voluntary evacuation package.

Only a handful of people were scheduled to leave the island Saturday according to Montserrat government spokesmen, although about 800 of the 5,000 strong population still on the island have registered to go over the next few days.

Ms. Short said her government department's budget was designed to help the poorest people on Earth.

"I have to be very responsible about how it is spent. It would be weak politics if I said 'they are making a noise and a row. Oh dear, give them more money.'"

"People in Britain do not get compensation if they suffer," she said.

More than half the population has already left the island since the Soufriere Hills Volcano stirred to life in July 1995 after nearly four centuries of dormancy.

Pope celebrates mass for a million to climax youth fest

PARIS (AFP) — Pope John Paul II celebrated a huge open-air mass for more than one million young Catholics at a racecourse outside Paris Sunday in a colourful climax to a six-day evangelical festival in the French capital, organisers said.

The 77-year-old Pontiff, visibly tired by the sweltering temperatures but basking in the huge turnout, was acclaimed by a sea of waving flags after the mass at the Longchamp racecourse west of Paris.

Rousing "Hallelujahs" resounded across the Bois de Boulogne from the race track, turned into an open-air cathedral for the occasion to mark the end of the six-day World Youth Days Festival of Catholic youth from 160 countries worldwide.

The turnout was considerably higher than expected for the papal mass. Catholic officials had predicted up to 700,000 would attend.

"Dear young people, your path does not stop here. Go forth on the roads of humanity," said the beaming Pontiff to the huge masses.

The six-day festival began last Tuesday and has brought together hundreds of thousands of young Catholics from some 160 countries for a carnival-like week of vigils and evangelical events.

The World Youth Days Festival event is held in a different city every two years. In 1995 it was held in the Philippines, in 1993 in the United States and in 1991 in Pope John Paul's native Poland.

On Sunday 900,000 pilgrims packed into the Longchamp Racecourse, many having spent the night there after a papal vigil Saturday night, while more than 200,000 more gathered to follow the mass on huge screens erected outside, organisers said.

Under clear blue skies the ageing Pontiff, who has been in Paris since Thursday, preceded the mass by processing among the faithful in his trademark Popemobile.

A sea of multi-coloured national flags from around the world faced him as, flanked by hundreds of bishops, he greeted the huge crowds from a vast cathedral style

podium set up at one end of the famous racecourse for the mass.

Top South Korean conductor, Myung Whun Chung led the official mass-music, which was supplemented with ethnic African rhythms for some part of the service.

Temperatures were once again sweltering. Authorities said more than 5,000 people needed medical treatment, many due to the effect of pollution which has reached record levels in Paris in recent weeks.

The Pope, who underwent cancer surgery last year, has appeared in relatively good form during the Paris trip. However as he suffers from Parkinson's disease, his left hand trembles constantly.

The Longchamp mass was the climax of the six day festival. It was preceded Saturday night by a two-hour vigil at the racecourse, at which the Pope baptised 10 young people as a symbol of the global nature of the event.

The Pope took the opportunity to try to defuse a row which has dogged the festival: That the climax of the festival coincides with the anniversary of a 16th century massacre by French Catholics of the Protestants.

Specifically he conceded the church's role in the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre on Aug. 24, 1572, and said religious authorities could not hide from the truth if they were to achieve reconciliation.

"Acknowledging the weaknesses of the past is an act of honesty and courage which helps us to strengthen our faith," he told young Catholics.

The Pope's trip has been marred by protests over a controversial visit Friday to the grave of a noted anti-abortion campaigner, Jerome Lejeune.

The ruling Socialist Party of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin led criticism of the visit, saying it "regretted" his decision, arguing that it could only encourage anti-abortion militants to break the law.

Mr. Jospin was due to meet the Pope Sunday afternoon shortly before his departure for Rome.

Kohl plans to dump Waigel in cabinet reshuffle — newspapers

BONN (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl is planning to replace his job-weary finance minister and other embattled leaders in his unpopular government as part of a major shake-up next month, several German newspapers reported Sunday.

The Bild Am Sonntag tabloid quoted sources close to Mr. Kohl saying the chancellor was deeply annoyed Finance Minister Theo Waigel had gone public with his desire to leave the taxing job next year, but would grant the lame duck Mr. Waigel his wish now.

The Welt Am Sonntag, an authoritative conservative Sunday paper, reported the reshuffle would take place before elections in the state of Hamburg on Sept. 21.

"A finance minister who announces plans to resign no longer can fight successfully in parliament for tax reform and abroad for a stable euro," a source Bild Am Sonntag called a close Kohl ally was quoted as saying.

"Kohl believes you shouldn't stop people who want to go," the newspaper added.

A government spokesman in Bonn said there was no truth to the reports, which also said Mr. Kohl's top deputy, parliamentary leader

Wolfgang Schäuble, would replace Mr. Waigel leading a "super ministry" made up of the finance and economics ministries.

"The government denies the reports," said a spokesman in Bonn. "They are part of the series of false speculation."

The political crisis was sparked when Mr. Waigel, 58, said he was tired of shouldering the heavy burden of managing the country's deficit-ridden finances and wanted to leave the thankless office next year.

Though Mr. Waigel later backtracked and said he did not want to leave in 1998, the half-hearted retreat failed to quell speculation about his future and fuelled a bitter row among the three parties in Mr. Kohl's centre-right coalition.

Mr. Waigel fanned the flames in an interview with Focus magazine published Monday when he said that a cabinet reshuffle was definitely planned before the 1998 elections.

The row — especially the suggestion that Mr. Waigel may take the Foreign Ministry now held by the junior coalition partners, the Free Democrats (FDP) — has further eroded public support for Mr. Kohl's unpopu-

lar government.

A survey published in this week's editions of Der Spiegel showed the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) widening their lead over Mr. Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU). The Ennvid survey showed a likely left-wing alliance of SPD and Greens would crush Mr. Kohl's centre-right coalition by a score of 50 to 41.

"Waigel's demands for a reshuffle and his back and forth over the Finance Ministry have done more to harm the coalition in a few days than all the attacks from the opposition in the last few years," said Bild Am Sonntag columnist Michael Spreng.

With newspapers such as the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung saying Mr. Waigel was now a "burden rather than an asset" for Mr. Kohl, pressure was growing on the chancellor to act when he returns to Bonn Monday after his summer holiday.

"Leading politicians in the coalition now expect Mr. Kohl to reshuffle his cabinet in September," said the Welt Am Sonntag newspaper. "It would give the Christian Democrats the lift they need before state elections in Hamburg on Sept. 21."

Sri Lankan troops dig in at Tiger stronghold

COLOMBO (AFP) — Thousands of Sri Lankan soldiers Sunday were consolidating a key position captured from Tamil Tiger rebels after heavy fighting that killed more than 437 on both sides, the Defence Ministry said.

Fighter jets bombed targets of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), while ground forces used artillery to neutralise rebel mortar positions in the island's north, the ministry said in a statement.

"Troops continue to consolidate in the newly captured area and dominate the area ahead of the defences," the ministry statement added Sunday. It said Tigers used mortars against army defences but did not say if there were casualties.

Security forces by Saturday had moved north-westwards from the key Puliyankulam Railway Station they captured from the LTTE a day earlier, officials said.

Defence sources said the army advance deeper into rebel-held territory to open a strategic land route has been delayed due to intense

resistance by the guerrillas. However, the Defence Ministry said Saturday that security forces achieved "very satisfactory results" and had been able to "draw and kill large groups of terrorists from their concentrations."

The ministry said 70 Tigers were killed Friday, raising rebel losses since the latest military push was started on Tuesday to 360. Seven soldiers were also killed Friday, pushing military losses to 77.

Tiger guerrillas are leading a drawn-out campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions, where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in bitter fighting in the past 25 years.

There has been no immediate reaction from the LTTE to the army claims but the rebels in a statement received here Sunday said they were restricting the number of people allowed to cross their lines to army-held areas.

The rebel statement accused the military of adopting an "erratic policy" in letting Tamil civilians enter

government-controlled areas from Tiger territory and said they often turned back people.

"In view of this, the LTTE's transport and travel division will regulate the number of Tamil travellers venturing to (the north-western district of) Mannar checkpoint, allowing them through in smaller batches to reduce the chance of the Sinhala military turning people back," the LTTE said, referring to government forces.

The statement made no reference to the ongoing battles in the northern Wanni region.

Government troops are engaged in a major drive to capture the main road through rebel-held territory in the north to link the Jaffna peninsula with the rest of the country.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it was preparing to mediate in the release of a North Korean merchant vessel, the MV Morang Bong, seized by the LTTE last month after the rebels killed a crewman.

"Six crewmen will be taken over the weekend to

inspect the ship and work out the possibilities to take it out," ICRC spokesman Harsha Gunawardena said. The vessel is believed to be held somewhere in the island's north-east.

The Morang Bong was returning from the northern peninsula of Jaffna when it was boarded by armed Tiger guerrillas who later announced they would attack any ship taking supplies to the region.

More than 1,380 people from both sides have been killed, according to official estimates, since the offensive was launched on May 13 to open the 75 kilometre road cutting through rebel-dominated jungles.

The military has advanced just over 17 kilometres since intense rebel counterattacks launched on June 11 and has admitted losing 523 troops — or the equivalent of just over 30 soldiers per kilometre.

The Tigers, who hold the main land access to Jaffna, currently supplied only by air and sea, will be confined to the jungles in the island's north-east if the government succeeds in opening the highway.

As Muslims who speak a lot about religion as affecting all aspects of our life, why not start a process of practical application of our faith where it counts most.

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the report said.
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Vietnam doctor uses herbs to fight drugs

By Adrian Edwards
Reuters

XA LINH, Vietnam — Tran Khuong Dan is not your normal physician. His father was an opium addict, his brother died of an overdose. Tragedy led him to explore the mind-bending post-war world of Saigon opium dens.

"You know, after the war ended, hundreds of wounded veterans were addicted to the pain-killer morphine," he says. "The idea of finding an anti-drug addiction medicine came into my mind during the time I lived in a neighbourhood of drug addicts in Saigon."

Dr. Dan turned himself into an addict and lived for himself the cravings associated with opium addiction or chasing the heroin dragon, as well as the torment of withdrawal.

He sold his home. He travelled to live among tribal groups in northern Vietnam where he sought an answer to addiction in traditional herbal remedies among communities where opium had been grown for decades.

Fifteen years after that quest began, the 55-year-old may have found a cure, with potential implications for addicts worldwide.

United Nations testing under way

In June this year the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced it was stepping up testing of the medicine that Dan created, a fiery-tasting brown syrup named heantos.

Roy Morey, the UNDP's Washington director, told a news conference in the United States that the medicine had already been tested on 3,000 Vietnamese addicts.

He said trials had shown a high degree of success and reported extraordinary results, with only about a 30 per cent rate of relapse, or readdiction, and minimal side-effects.

Full testing would require two more years, but follow-up studies were under way in both Vietnam and the United States by the Vietnamese government and the John Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore.

"It's very exciting," says Laura Dillon of the UNDP's Hanoi office. "I'm told normal withdrawal from addiction can feel like thousands of maggots crawling up your legs. It drives people mad. Heantos seems to avoid those effects."

Medicine tested on taxi drivers

At a small centre in Hoa Binh, some 60 kilometres (west of Hanoi, nervous heroin addicts arrive at a small rehabilitation centre to begin carefully supervised treatment.

One is a young Hanoi taxi driver, a group notorious for its use of drugs. He breaks down in tears as he is searched in front of foreign reporters.

Patients who have already received treatment declare the process a success.

"I no longer have cravings since I took heantos," says Le Ngoc Binh, a young woman who until June was a heroin addict. "Now I can't think of drugs. If I do, it makes me vomit."

Doctors say the medicine is delivered in two doses. The first eliminates withdrawal symptoms and within a week leaves patients able to abstain. The second course is taken a month later to prevent readdiction.

It is said to have a quick effect on addicts to heroin, cocaine and some addictive medicines. For opium users the process is slower.

In Vietnam, the costs of treatment are typically around \$30 per person, about a third of the cost of existing alternatives.

The medicine is non-addictive, and so far — apart from difficulties noted by some patients in sleeping



Sixty-three-year-old Hang A Trang, smokes opium from a pipe in a dimly lit room in the northern village of Xa Linh. Trang who has been addicted to opium for 34 years claims he wants to kick the habit. Vietnamese doctors and United Nations officials are investigating the potential of "Heantos", a locally produced herbal medicine as a cure for opium and heroin addiction. Heantos is said to cure people of addiction in as little as five days with very few side-effects (Reuters photo)

during the first course — few side-effects have been noted.

Challenge to prove heantos lives up to claims

Eighty kilometres away in Xa Linh, a poor village near

the Laos border, 63-year-old Hang A Trang scoops opium paste into a pipe, holds it over an oil-lamp flame in a dimly lit room, inhales and lays back in ecstasy.

The image is straight out of a 19th century east Asia of opium dens and crazed

addicts. But for thousands of people across the thinly populated and ancient world of northern Indochina it is a reality that remains today.

"I used to plant opium to earn money. But I used it as a medicine, and became hooked," said the addict of

34 years, adding that he has little faith in medicines and believes he would suffer relapse.

For the scientists examining heantos the scepticism may be of a more professional nature. But it underlies key questions about a

treatment that, if it lives up to its almost mythical billing, could affect lives around the world.

Estimates of the cost of drug abuse in the United States alone range from \$70 billion to \$80 billion a year for treatment, crime associ-

ated with drug addiction and the cost of AIDS, which can be transmitted by users sharing needles.

Dr. Dan, however, says he is not interested in the possible money. "I am a doctor. All I want is to cure people," he says.

NASA scientists dream about possible manned mission to Mars

By Philippe Alfrey
Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON — Their ambitions soaring and horizons expanding after the Mars Pathfinder's phenomenal success, NASA scientists have gone into overdrive over the possibility of a manned mission to the red planet.

Officially, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration says such a project is a long way off — that all the agency has decided on is a \$25 billion budget and an eight-year time frame to put a man on Mars.

But as the Pathfinder and the sojourner rover robot have surpassed all their mission goals — and show every indication of recording their unprecedented data indefinitely — NASA scientists are focusing on the next frontier. The unmanned Pathfinder landed on Mars July 4.

The obstacles to a manned mission are formidable. A report by the National Research Council curiously reminded a euphoric scientific community that the existing scientific arsenal was incapable of landing astronauts on Mars or even enabling them to stay for extended periods on the moon.

"Sending a crew to Mars would take nearly two years round-trip and it would be difficult and costly — if not impossible — to completely stock or replenish the necessary, food, water and oxygen supplies," the report said.

Mars is a particularly inhospitable planet for humans, with its oxygen-

free atmosphere, near-zero gravity, deadly cosmic rays, temperatures approaching minus 73 degrees Celsius (minus 163 Fahrenheit) and winds over 200 kilometers an hour.

The magnitude of a manned mission defies both NASA's budget constraints and the new philosophy summed up by Pathfinder chief scientist Daniel Goldin as "better, faster, cheaper".

"Sending a crew to Mars would take nearly two years round-trip and it would be difficult and costly — if not impossible — to completely stock or replenish the necessary, food, water and oxygen supplies."

But the probe's success has started the scientists dreaming again of ways to beat the odds.

"It's in essence trying to keep people alive for two and a half years two hundred millions miles away with no store to go to," said

Alan Ladwig, NASA associate administrator in the office of policy and plans. "We have to conceive a life support system and transfer it to Mars," he said.

Fuel is another problem. "Carrying enough fuel is a pretty substantial weight and therefore cost penalty," said Frank O'Donnell of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, which is running the Pathfinder mission.

"If it were possible to go with just enough fuel to get there, then to make the rest there, it would obviously cut down on the weight tremendously," Mr. O'Donnell said.

NASA is now studying the feasibility of building a facility on Mars that would combine hydrogen with the carbon dioxide gas in the planet's atmosphere to produce liquid oxygen to power the spacecraft back to earth.

The same principle would be applied to the production of oxygen for crew members.

"They have just succeeded in taking some seed from a broccoli sent aboard Mir and growing it again," said NASA spokesman Ray Costello. "That's the kind of challenge we have to meet because it's going to take a fair amount of broccoli to come up with the atmosphere for a crew to breathe."

"I think it's do-able," said Mr. Ladwig. "Technically, I believe we're going to meet the challenge. The only questions become when we are going there and who."

Radiation leaks alarm Long Islanders

UPTON, NEW YORK (AP) — Eileen Selig says "no" whenever her 6-year-old daughter asks to take a bath.

She makes her children brush their teeth with bottled water.

Although scientists at neighbouring Brookhaven National Laboratory say it's safe, the 36-year-old mother of two is terrified that radiation leaking into the groundwater from the plant will reach her family and give them cancer.

Ms. Selig had lived contentedly for six years here on eastern Long Island — until 1995. That's when the prestigious scientific research lab announced a plan to dump radioactive waste into the Peconic River as part of a sewage treatment upgrade.

That was just the beginning. Since then, progressively more disturbing reports have been surfacing about radioactive leaks, mishaps, sloppy practices and lack of accountability at the plant — just 100 kilometers east of New York City.

Public opposition has grown so loud that Brookhaven was forced to revise not only its sewage-treatment plan, but its management as a whole.

A legion of neighbours, environmentalists, politicians and health officials have come to believe that the renowned research facility is sacrificing the community's health and a New York summer playground at the altar of science.

Brookhaven officials insist the damage is minimal. "We've contaminated the aquifer," acknowledges Bob Casey, head of the plant's Safety and Environmental Division, referring to the underground water system.

"But we have not created conditions that are harmful to health."

Helen Caldicott, an Australian paediatrician who founded the Nobel Prize-winning Physicians for Social Responsibility, says

that's untrue.

"There's gross irresponsibility, scientifically and medically, there," says Ms. Caldicott, who lives at the eastern tip of Long Island.

Brookhaven lies in the pine barrens, 40,000 hectares of fragile woodlands atop the sole drinking water source for Long Island's 2.7 million residents. It lies near one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world and its beaches and natural beauty attract thousands every summer weekend.

Most of its existence, Brookhaven went about its business virtually beholden to no one. Opened by the energy department in 1947, the lab was operated by Associated Universities Inc., a group of nine northeastern universities.

As a federal entity, it didn't have to meet state or local regulations; as a research facility it was exempt from nuclear regulatory commission oversight.

On its secluded 2,100 hectares, scientists quietly earned four Nobel prizes for discoveries on the basics of matter, treatments for cancer and other breakthroughs using high-tech atom-smashing machines.

But Brookhaven lost its low profile in a big way in January when it revealed it had measured a radioactive substance called tritium at 11 times the safe drinking-water standard in groundwater near one of its nuclear reactors.

Subsequent accounts revealed that tritium had been leaking for 12 years, reaching 30 times the safe level and forming a radioactive plume almost 600 meters long. The source is believed to be a 257,400-litre pool where spent fuel rods from the plant's high

flux beam reactor are stored until they can be shipped for reprocessing.

Other radioactive materials such as strontium-90, cesium-137 and cobalt-60 — and chemicals with names such as trichloroethane and ethylene dibromide — also have made their way into the groundwater.

None of the Brookhaven officials interviewed could say what tritium does to harm humans, and in what quantities.

Ms. Caldicott says there is no such thing as a safe dose of radiation — even tiny concentrations strengthen and become potentially lethal as they travel up the food chain.

Tritium, because it resembles water, invades the body's water molecules and combines in DNA, where once bound into organic molecules it becomes up to 300 times more toxic, Ms. Caldicott says.

At the headwaters of the Peconic, the plant is in a state-designated groundwater protection area. As white-tailed deer nibble grass beside wells installed to determine the extent of the leak, Richard Amper, head of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, worries about wild animals.

"They can tell their employees not to drink the water, but they can't tell the deer or the red fox or the fish," he says.

In 1980, Brookhaven was placed on the state's list of inactive hazardous waste disposal sites. In 1989, the EPA designated it a hazardous-waste cleanup site, citing 28 problems that needed attention.

Among recent incidents that have plagued the plant was the recent contamination of six lab workers who were exposed to small doses of radioactive chlorine while preparing to use a research reactor, the energy department said.

But beyond the potential danger, what has really enraged residents and state officials has been the lab's apparent disregard for their concerns.

"It seems that every time you pick up a paper, you're finding that they have been withholding results and there's another contamination, or the tritium has risen to higher levels than initially disclosed," says Marc Carey, a spokesman for New York Attorney General Dennis Vacco, who is investigating.

William Gunther, head of Brookhaven's Office of Environmental Restoration, acknowledges that officials ignored tritium found near the reactor in 1985 and 1986, giving higher priority to problems closer to the boundary.

The county health department persuaded Brookhaven officials to sign an agreement in 1987 to adhere to environmental standards. But plant officials insisted the reactor's storage pool needed no modifications, and refused to sample groundwater surrounding it until last summer, says Mary Hibberd, Suffolk County's health commissioner.

That's when the tritium leak turned up. "It just seems to me arrogant to just say, 'We know it's not leaking and we're not even going to test for it,'" Ms. Hibberd says.

Mr. Casey concedes: "In hindsight, at this point, all of that is clearly not the way we'd do it now."

The plant employs 3,200 people and contributes \$490 million a year to the local economy.

Now, its ageing reactor is closed indefinitely while officials try to pump the tritium from where it has leached downstream back to the reactor area. After the radioactive fuel rods are removed from the leaking pool, the lab plans to drain it and line it with two layers of steel.

Lab Director Dr. Nicholas Samios stepped down in May, succeeded by interim Director Dr. Lyle H. Schwartz, who vowed to clean up the contamination and regain the public's trust.

"A complete change in the culture here is required and I am deeply committed to starting the process," Dr. Schwartz said.

U.S. Energy Secretary Federico Peña fired associated universities, saying, "There need not, and will not, be a trade-off between award-winning scientific research and environment, safety and health. Their performance was unacceptable, inexcusable, and flat-out wrong."

U.S. Congressman Michael Forbes and Sen. Alfonse d'Amato have asked Congress to scrutinise the lab. They also have demanded that the energy department restore Brookhaven's budget for environmental restoration and waste management, which was cut from \$33 million in 1996 to \$21.5 million for 1997.

Residents recently discovered that Brookhaven failed to notify them about a contaminated-water spill in July 1995, and say they also were never notified about a small radiation leak in March 1994. Seven workers were contaminated after nuclear research equipment caught fire.

About 225 people living within 16 kilometers of the lab have filed a \$2 billion class-action lawsuit against associated universities, seeking compensation for health problems and lost property value.

Eileen Selig has sent her children's baby teeth off to an epidemiologist to see if they contain strontium-90.

"My 6-year-old, she loves to take baths, to play with her water toys," Ms. Selig says. "I don't let her take baths anymore. Just quick showers."

Workshop to search for remedies for the industrial sector's ailments

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) will hold a week-long workshop with experts from Japan and Canada in order to search for remedies for the industrial sector's ailments, organisers said Sunday.

Said Alloush, president of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), said the workshop, held under the title "the national policy for science and technology," is aimed also at formulating a mechanism to help domestic industry compete in the world market.

Among the issues that will be discussed, are quality control, produc-

tivity and administrative reform in local industry, Dr. Alloush added.

The RSS chief emphasised that the workshop will not provide "magic solutions" to the problems that face Jordanian industry but will help in gaining "suggestions" and introducing a "mechanism" to overcome the difficulties that hinder its progress.

He added that the Japanese government expressed its willingness to send experts to Jordan to help in formulating the mechanism of the industrial policy in the Kingdom.

Ahmad Mango, an official at the RSS, said Japan's own industrial policy includes many components such as

encouraging foreign investments, developing strategic industries, technology import, legislation flexibility and cooperation with the private sector.

Dr. Mango said the Japanese experience was a good example not only for Jordanian industry but for all developing countries.

He told reporters that Canadian experts will brief Jordanian participants on their experience in administrative reform designed to suit the Canadian environment and industry.

Osama Khalidi, head of the HCST secretariat, said some of the workshop's sessions will be held in the Industrial City of Sahab to allow

participants to closely study the problems encountered by the factories there.

Dr. Khalidi said the conference follows a workshop that was held in June last year focusing on the industrial policy.

He stressed that a new mechanism should take into consideration all the components of industry such as employee, employer, different government departments and ministries.

Dr. Khalidi said that it should also study means to develop the laws that concern the investment environment in order to facilitate investments and encourage foreign capital.

Arab Gulf countries need \$100 billion for oil, gas projects

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states need to spend nearly \$100 billion on projects to develop their oil and gas industry to face growing domestic and foreign demand, according to an official study.

The funds are part of a total investment of between \$200 billion and \$250 billion in energy and communication until the year 2010 in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), said the study by Khaled Al Fayed, chief executive of the Gulf Investment Corporation (GIC), said.

"The oil and gas sector alone needs an investment of around \$100 billion while nearly \$35 billion are needed for petrochemical projects," he wrote in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) business weekly Emirates Today.

But Mr. Fayed, whose corporation groups the six GCC members, said regional states should resort to the private sector to ensure financing.

"Considering such huge investments, the GCC governments should give a chance to the local and foreign private sector to participate," he said.

Most GCC countries have embarked on projects to boost their oil production capacity and tap their mammoth gas resources.

Industry sources said the six members — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE — have pumped more than \$30 billion since 1990 on maintenance and development of their oilfields.

Saudi Arabia, the world's dominant oil power, has announced plans to maintain its sustainable output capacity at nearly 9.5 million barrels per day (bpd) and expand it later to more than 10 million bpd. The plans include development of the giant Shayba desert oilfield.

Kuwait has also embarked on projects to boost capacity to three million bpd in the year 2000 from around 2.3 million bpd while the UAE has already raised its production potential to nearly 2.5 million bpd from two million bpd. It also plans to increase it to three million bpd in the next few years. The three countries control nearly 45 per cent of the world's total recoverable crude wealth and produce around 17 per cent of the global oil supplies. The production level is set to climb steadily after the year 2000.

Mr. Fayed said GCC states had already committed themselves to projects worth nearly \$36 billion, covering petro-

chemicals and gas liquefaction.

He cited giant LNG projects in Qatar and Oman and petrochemical ventures in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. A large part of the investments had come through borrowing from regional and foreign banks, he said.

"Gulf states have moved towards privatisation of their public enterprises but the process has remained slow," he said. "There should be quick steps by those countries to privatise their economies for better production."

Gulf states have often warned against a possible shortage of funds needed to develop their oil sector, saying this could result in a supply crisis in future. They have also urged consuming countries to cooperate with producers to keep crude prices high to secure financing for such projects.

Most Gulf states have been reeling under economic and financial problems caused by a decline in crude prices over the past decade.

From a record \$180 billion in 1981, the GCC's oil income has plummeted to an average \$70 billion annually over the past 10 years. In real terms, the income was below \$30 billion in 1996.

Syria's wheat production expected to fall

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria's wheat production is expected to fall almost 25 per cent in 1997, to 3.2 million tonnes compared to four million tonnes last year, the government daily Tishrin has said.

The shortfall is due to a late winter freeze in April and low rainfall, the Syrian agriculture ministry said.

Syria has been self-sufficient in wheat since 1992, when it reached a production level of three million tonnes. It had previously been an importer of the grain.

The overall production of grains fell in 1997, except for chick peas, which rose to 60 million tonnes from 46 million tonnes in 1996.

The expected harvest of lentils this year is 93 million tonnes compared to 152 million tonnes in 1996.

Barley production is also expected to fall to 1.1 million tonnes in 1997 from 1.6 million tonnes last year.

Domestic cereal production has so far fulfilled consumption levels this year.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
US Dollar	1.0000	1.4862	0.6301	1.5189	117.48	1,3537	180.25	2,0800	6,2225
DE Mark	0.5417	1.0000	0.3410	0.6221	63.63	7.7544	97.45	1,1257	3,3882
GB Sterling	1.5670	2.9315	1.0000	2.4113	166.83	2,2116	266.75	3,3031	9,8442
CH Franc	0.6584	1.2142	0.4141	1.0000	77.33	9,9198	118.11	137.25	4,0938
JP Yen	0.0085	1.5711	0.5357	1.2927	1.0000	1,1858	15.32	176.88	5,2957
CA Dollar	0.7175	1.3305	0.4505	1.0944	1.19	1,2855	14.97	14.97	4,4812
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0251	0.3496	0.8843	153.16	0.7736	11.54	3,4545	2,9929
NL Guilder	0.4808	0.8939	0.3059	0.7309	95.48	0.8704	88.12	1,154	3,4545
FR Franc	0.1607	0.2967	0.1012	0.24094	18.85	0.2239	33.41	33.4100	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	IRP	ESP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7080	3.7500	0.3770	3.6400	0.3053	3.6728	1538.00	3,3850
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	1.0000	5.2975	0.5325	5.1412	0.4311	5.1876	2172.32	4,7811
Saudi Riyal	0.2658	0.1888	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0814	0.98	410.07	0,9025
Bahraini Dinar	2.65	1.8791	9.9491	1.0000	9.86	0.8097	9.74	4079.79	8,9793
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1845	1.0304	1.0304	1.0000	0.8059	1.01	422.55	0,9299
Kuwait Dinar	3.2760	2.3194	12.2570	1.2350	11.82	1.0000	12.03	5088.49	9,9299
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0212	0.9911	0.8831	1.00	418.75	0,9216
Lebanese 1000	0.05	0.0803	2,4388	0.2431	2,3887	0.1895	2,3880	1,154	2,2000
Egyptian	0.2954	0.2092	1.1080	0.1114	1.0753	0.0902	1.0850	454.38	-

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Today
Brent	18.99	19.17
WTI	20.14	20.04
Bonny	18.99	19.17
Dubai	17.80	17.70
UL Gas	217.00	213.00

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
SA Riyal	0.2658	0.4928	0.1679	0.4054	31.338	0.2723	0.503	0.1715	0.414
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.503	0.1715	0.414	31.338	0.2723	0.503	0.1715	0.414
KW Dinar	3.2760	6.0533	2.0631	4.9801	384.91	3.2760	6.0533	2.0631	384.91
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.902	1.6708	4.0339	311.72	0.3770	4.902	1.6708	311.72
CY Pound	1.8395	3.3937	1.1573	2.7918	215.89	1.8395	3.3937	1.1573	215.89

Metal Prices		
Commodity	Last	Today
Gold (oz's)	325	323.5
Silver (oz's)	4.52	4.54
Platinum (oz's)	413	416
AL (3 Months)	1844	1846
CU (3 Months)	2186	2190
Zinc (3 Months)	1494	1499
Lead (3 Months)	820	823
Ni (3 Months)	6730	6750

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
USD	5.43	5.58	5.68	5.78	5.87	-	-	-	-
GBP	5.94	7.00	7.12	7.18	7.31	-	-	-	-
JPY	0.44	0.45	0.45	0.56	0.47	-	-	-	-
DEM	3.12	3.21	3.35	3.43	3.44	-	-	-	-
FRF	3.23	3.31	3.40	3.52	3.58	-	-	-	-
CHF	1.33	1.38	1.53	1.43	1.76	-	-	-	-
ITL	6.73	6.70	6.60	6.43	6.37	-	-	-	-

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	High	Low	Open	Close	High	Low	Open
New York	7994.52	-26.71	8023.1	7988.5	8021.2	-	-	-	-
Nasdaq	5846.98	-2.89	5878.7	5838.28	5838.28	-	-	-	-
London	4983.7	25.3	5014.1	4962.5	4958.4	-	-	-	-
Tokyo	19157.12	-96.11	19394	19125	19252	-	-	-	-
Paris	2980.83	-18.84	0.83	2992.6	2991	2979.3	-	-	-
Frankfurt	4253.87	30.24	4278.5	4241.7	4223.4	-	-	-	-

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Today
Coffee (c/b)	170	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1996	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	347.8	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	143	Spot
Soya (c/b)	22.02	Spot
Tea (c/b)	185	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	450	Spot

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GB Sterling	1.1262	1.1319	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE Mark	0.3808	0.3827	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CH Franc	0.4839	0.4862	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FR Franc	0.113	0.1136	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JP Yen	0.5989	0.6029	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NL Guilder	0.3382	0.3399	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IT Lira	0.3912	0.3932	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

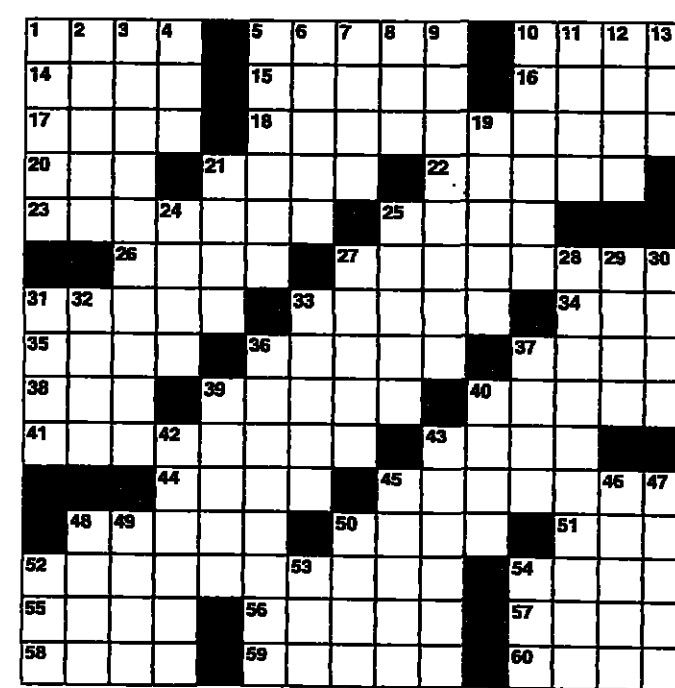
* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Wearing sandals
- Core group
- Friendly talk
- Wish
- "Irish Rose"
- Actor Cronyn
- Final word
- Take off prematurely
- All the President's —
- No way, —!
- Part of a stair step
- Heart contraction
- Shopping place
- Gaelic
- Adroit maneuverings
- Bouquet flowers
- Joins the chorus
- Everything
- Dies —
- "La — Vita"
- As well
- Hindrance
- Haggard of
- country music
- Lace end
- Lifts
- Lively
- City on the Oka
- Machine-gunned
- Posts
- Gumbo
- Opening number
- Get off the hook
- Disney film
- Comic Johnson
- Fish-eating birds
- Hun king
- Anthropologist
- Margaret
- Food regimens
- Resounding blow

- DOWN
- Pillow covers
 - Cozy
 - Magic words
 - Retreat



by C.F. Murray

- Coax
- Maltreat
- Coin
- Agent, for short
- Makes hostile
- War and hope
- Gigantic
- Asian river
- Gymnast's goal
- Takes on
- Chinese idol
- Yew, e.g.
- Chop
- Sates
- Set out
- In addition
- Niche
- Fair attraction
- Nuncupative
- City near Quebec
- Hated
- Taj Mahal site
- Adress Thomas
- Guam harbor
- Said
- Accent
- Trapshooting
- Gay
- Jeans material

Puzzle solved:

SWAP	FAIL	GAMES	HILL	ERSE	ATONE	OLGA	RANG	FELON	PLAYING	THE	FIELD	TVS	OVEN	OMAHA	BROAD	DES	MARINA	END	POLA	IGON	VALSE	LAIT	TRIG	ALI	REALTY	SOD	SLOE	TYLER	ETON	OCS	PLAYING	WITH	FIRE	LAVIN	WILT	ARID	AMONG	ALIE	IAGO	TANGY	YEAR	REAM
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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have some interesting ideas about how to add to your present income today, however, you must manipulate the difficulties connected with them first. Later this evening will be good to go out on the town with your mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) An idea which someone gives you may at first seem worthless today, however, if you look more closely you'll change your mind. Get out later this evening and socialise with your mate and meet close friends in the process.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Find a method of operation today to deal with a difficult fellow associate which will make you more efficient in your own career activities. Purchase something thoughtful for your mate and he or she will be return your appreciation.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get in touch with a fellow associate early today and arrange a recreational activity which he or she will enjoy. Bring your mate along, and you'll benefit greatly by making the experience quite enjoyable.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you invite any guests into your home today, make sure they are trustworthy or you could discover some items are missing. Get practical matters arranged with your loved ones, despite delays which could exist.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Don't write or say anything today when communicating with others which could in the days ahead be used against you. Be sure to drive with the utmost care later this evening, so that you don't get into any difficulties.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get advice from an expert today before dealing with any financial or tax matters. Be sure you maintain your poise in any conversations, so that you won't generate the wrong impression, especially with a bigwig.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you want to get a very practical person to agree with your ideas today, be sure you have all the correct facts and figures before you begin. Later this evening will be good for seeking the assistance of a fellow associate.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you agree to some labour for someone today, be sure you are both agreed on the compensation to be received. Work on improving your property and thereby you can make it more valuable and beautiful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Plan some amusements for the days ahead, however, don't neglect other promises you have made. Try to be more understanding of your mate and he or she will be quite receptive to all of the attention provided.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you invite any guests into your home today, don

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

JTC puts new 172,521 telephone lines into operation

STARTING SUNDAY, the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) has put into operation 172,521 new telephone lines. Board Chairman Walid Dweik told Al Ra'i that residents of Jabal Nazzal, Jabal Al Naser and the northern parts of the cities of Irbid and Zarqa can immediately obtain a telephone line after submitting an application for subscription. Noting that these areas were previously closed for any telephone service, Mr. Dweik stressed that the residents of the mentioned locations need not wait to get a telephone line.

Mr. Dweik said telephone services would be soon open for residents of Abu Alanda, Sahab and Abdoun in the Amman area as well as Edoun in the Irbid Governorate after putting into operation the main electronic telephone exchange and the other small exchanges associated with it and after transferring all the present subscribers to the new network.

He indicated that work is underway to complete the final stages for the new network in the areas that were not covered by the old network. "Immediately after completion these networks, we will start to respond to all demands for the telephone service," he emphasised (Al Ra'i).

Petra earns JD3.9 million during first seven months of '97

VISITORS OF Petra during the first seven months of this year paid a total of JD3.92 million in entrance fees, the inspector and office manager at the site said. He added that the number of visitors during the period was 215,308 persons of whom 22,150 persons were Jordanians.

The manager, Suleiman Farajat, said that the number of visitors during last month was 23,503 persons of whom 5,150 persons were Jordanians. Entrance fees during this month amounted to JD352,800. He indicated that 10,850 visitors stayed in the area for one day, 6,062 persons for two days and 255 visitors for three days (Al Ra'i).

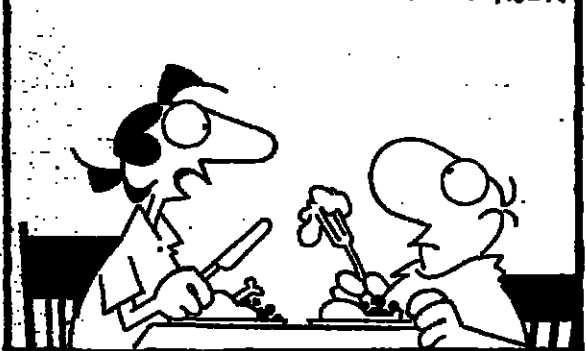
Major industrial city planned at Al Hasa

A MAJOR industrial city for the production of chemicals and chemical derivatives will be established at Al Hasa to provide the suitable infrastructure and new investment opportunities for the area, Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki has said. He explained that the industrial city, which the private sector will help in establishing, aims at benefiting from the industrial production at Al Hasa so that the area will not become a weak site due to diminishing phosphate raw material in the area.

Answering other questions during an interview with Petra, the Jordan News Agency, the minister affirmed that there will be no increase in the prices of rice and sugar in the short and medium terms. "To the contrary there could be a drop in prices," he said adding that the Ministry of Supply will intervene to lower the price of any product exceeding the cost and a reasonable profit.

Asked about merging the Ministry of Supply with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Dr. Mulki said merger procedures are in the final stages of studying the new organisation of the ministry. Such organisation will regulate the supervision and systemisation of the internal and external trade sector in order to ensure that good-quality products reach the consumers at the appropriate time and prices (Al Ra'i).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"We weren't surprised when they turned off the office lights to save money. Management keeps us in the dark about everything else!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Hazel Arnold and Mike Jorgensen

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TYJET

MYMUR

AXROTH

INKELT

Print answer here: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: MURKY ENVOY FROTHY NEGATE
Answer: A house as a wedding gift left the new couple - HOME FREE

Profits of Jordan Islamic Bank for Finance and Investment drop

AMMAN — According to the mid-year balance sheet and profit and loss statement, the profits of the Jordan Islamic Bank for Finance and Investment from investments dropped from JD20.68 million at the end of the first half of 1996 to JD12.52 million at the end of the first half of 1997.

Bank earnings were higher at JD1.31 million (JD1.08 million in 1996) and administrative and general expenses rose slightly to JD4.85 million.

Total assets increased from JD618.66 million at the end of 1996 to JD623.17 at the end of June 1997. The main component in this figure was the amount of financing and investment which declined from JD442.08 million at the end of 1996 to JD439.06 million at the end of June 1997.

Another decline was the balance in cash and deposits at banks as it dropped from JD68.04 million in 1996 to JD56.21 million at the end of last June.

Deposits from clients increased to JD510.68 million (JD502.30 in 1996) as total liabilities closed the mid-year at JD579.39 million (JD574.87 in 1996). Net shareholders' equity remained unchanged at JD43.78 million.

increase in administrative and general expenses caused a decline in net profit from JD3.19 million at the end of the first six months of 1996 to JD2.64 million at the end of the first half of 1997. This drop resulted despite a rise in total earnings from JD7.62 million to JD7.92 million at the end of June 1997.

Total current assets fell from JD3.07 million at the end of June 1996 to JD1.28 million, mainly due to a drop in receivables from JD2.13 million to JD0.69 million during the first six months of this year. Rising though, were the investments in shares of companies which climbed from JD2.45 million to JD4.50 million.

The 1997 mid-year balance sheet showed JD27.62 million in total fixed assets of which JD2.46 million were the book value of buildings, furniture and equipment in addition to JD1.96 million being the value of land and JD1.04 million payments on work in progress. Net fixed assets at the end of June 1996 amounted to JD25.09 million.

Current liabilities remained around the JD10.87 million level during both periods covered, but of this figure, debts to banks amounted to JD8.08 million, including one to the Arab Bank.

Taking into consideration that the company's registered capital is JD10.13 million, the net shareholders' equity at the end of June 1997 totalled JD21.03 million (JD18.43 million in 1996). The company has a total of JD4.69 million of retained earnings at the middle of this year.

The Arab International Company for Investment and Education

Higher depreciation and amortisation as well as an

The Jordan Industries and Match Company

The company did not provide any comparative 1996 figures and the mid-year 1997 balance sheet showed a net loss of JD12.467 which raised the accumulated losses to JD1.88 million.

Sales during the first six months of this year amounted to JD207.104, but JD188.386 of production costs and other expenses pulled the company into the red.

Total assets at the middle of this year stood at JD1.88 million, of which only JD0.5 million were current assets. Total liabilities were a little more than JD1 million, noting that bank credits amounted to JD0.63 million of the liabilities.

The authorised capital of the company is JD3 million, but the paid-up capital stood at JD2.63 million before the accumulated losses swallowed most of it leaving only JD0.84 million as net shareholders' equity.

Al Zarqa for Education and Investment Company

Out of JD1.28 million of earnings during the first half of this year, the company was able to generate a JD129.764 of net profit after various costs and expenses were deducted. However, the profit was small and left accumulated losses at JD0.88 million at the end of June 1997.

Total assets amounted to JD6.05 million with fixed assets accounting for JD5.74 million of the total. Liabilities totalled JD1.84 million of which JD1.37 million were long-term bills payable.

Taking into consideration the accumulated losses, the net shareholders equity stood at JD4.21 million at the end of June 1997, down from a JD4.66 million paid-up capital.

The Union Land Development Company

Accumulated losses rose to JD195.065 after adding the JD20.953 posted at the end of June 1997. This loss resulted from earnings totalling JD36.693 being less than the JD52.957 of expenses paid during the first six months of this year.

The accumulated loss brought down the JD5 million registered and paid-up capital to JD4.80 million.

Out of JD4.83 million of total assets, JD4.13 million were value of real estate and JD289.521 were long-term investments in shares of various companies. Among the assets are receivables for a total of JD393.353.

Arab Bank share sales push Amman Financial Market down

AMMAN (R) — A general manager of United Financial Investment, which brokered most of the transactions, said most of the Arab Bank shares were snapped up by two Omani investors at between 291 to 294 dinars a share.

Arab Bank is the main stock expected to benefit from a ruling which comes into effect next month scrapping a 50 per cent foreign ownership ceiling.

But the rest of the market remained sluggish, accounting for less than 300,000 dinars worth of business. The official 60-share Amman Financial Market (AFM) index fell 0.58 points to 164.28. Falling shares outnumbered gainers by 21 to nine, with another 12 trading but closing unchanged.

"The market is still on hold," Mr. Amad said. Arab Bank accounted for over 95 per cent of Sunday's 6.6 million dinar turnover, its highest this year, before closing just 1.5 dinars down at 292.5 dinars.

"This is a good indication that the bank is a blue-chip stock. The sale of the same amount of another stock would have had a very negative effect on the price," said Nasser Al Amad.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 24/08/1997

PART	12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADING	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
1	298.000	221.250	ARAB BANK	13.5	1.37	36	21600	6315045	294.00	292.50	-1.50
2	2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	21	14150	27578	1.97	1.96	-0.01
3	3.600	2.760	BANK OF JORDAN	6.5	0.00	2	82	188	3.05	3.07	0.02
4	1.210	0.880	HID. EAST INV. BK.	58.5	0.00	4	750	688	0.90	0.89	-0.01
5	5.200	4.200	THE HOUSING BK.	14.2	4.00	3	3000	9505	4.78	4.75	-0.03
6	4.180	2.440	JOR. KUNAFI BANK	10.8	0.00	13	1462	1462	3.10	3.03	-0.07
7	4.050	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.7	3.10	14	3300	12891	3.85	3.87	0.02
8	2.400	3.000	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	20.6	0.00	4	417	1331	3.22	3.20	-0.02
9	2.440	1.000	BETT. AL-HAL (BETHNA)	6	14.71	2	350	357	1.03	1.02	-0.01
10	1.440	0.850	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	2	223	207	0.95	0.93	-0.02
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 215.07			CHANGE: -0.44			101			44314		
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 114.51			CHANGE: -0.16			3			3550		
INDUSTRY SECTOR TOTALS											
INDEX: 121.78			CHANGE: -0.29			39			18264		
GRAND TOTAL											
INDEX: 164.28			CHANGE: -0.35			315			191967		
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 24/08/1997											
1	650	400	JOR. TRADE FCT.	10.9	0.00	6	9000	3690	41	41	-
2	950	640	JOR. FTH. INV. CO.	5	0.00	56	1975	56	1975	56	01
3	840	600	UNION INV. SOF	9	0.00	4	1598	319	70	70	-
4	570	370	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	12	6950	2711	39	39	-
5	950	730	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	7	0.00	2	2500	2150	85	85	01
6	950	610	UNION INV. SOF	71.9	0.00	14	2930	74	2930	74	01
7	1050	850	UNITED FOR FINANCIAL INV	49.3	0.00	2	20000	19000	95	95	-
8	730	500	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	1	200	102	50	51	01
9	870	580	JOR. INV. FIN. CO.	18.0	0.00	1	151	61	151	61	01
10	750	400	KATL. MULT. ENT. MARICO	9	0.00	4	4230	1998	47	47	-
11	960	900	READ MEK CONCRETE	10.9	0.00	1	4600	4140	90	90	00
12	820	710	JORDAN STEEL	34.9	0.00	2	1146	76	71	71	01
13	580	430	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	2	2000	1020	81	81	-
14	730	580	MIDWEST PAVING. 75K	9	0.00	7	7275	2862	64	64	-
15	1390	860	UNION TOBACCO 75K	9	0.00	2	2000	1862	1.02	1.01	-0.01
16	670	550	RAZI PAPER. 85K	9	0.00	2	4000	2025	60	60	-
17	570	320	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	4	1700	561	33	33	-
18	860	620	UNION TOBACCO 75K	10.9	0.00	2	1700	73	73	73	01
19	760	500	PEARL INV. P. CORP.	9	0.00	2	190	89	50	47	-0.03
20	820	590	KATL. MULT. ENT. MARICO	9	0.00	6	12950	8806	68	68	-
21	1000	700	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	94.8	0.00	43	4200	18952	70	70	01
22	860	590	HID. EAST INV. BK.	7.8	16.39	12	7200	4395	61	61	-
GRAND TOTAL											
INDEX: 164.28			CHANGE: -0.35			315			187063		
GRAND TOTAL											

1 = New 12 months high
2 = New 12 months low
3 = Listed during the past 12 months
4 = P/E ratio is 100 or more
5 = Negative P/E
6 = Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year

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Schumacher wins Belgian GP, stamps authority on title race

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium (AFP) — Michael Schumacher struck a major blow in the battle for the driver's world championship when he had a crushing win in the Belgian Grand Prix here on Sunday.

The 28-year-old German's win saw him take a 12-point lead over his nearest rival Jacques Villeneuve in the Williams who finished sixth.

Italy's Giancarlo Fisichella in a Jordan was second with Mika Hakkinen of Finland in the McLaren third.

It was stunning drive by the Ferrari driver who decided to run his car on intermediate tyres when a rain storm 20 minutes before the start turned parts of the track into a lake.

So dangerous were the conditions that organisers decided to start the race behind the pace car and for three laps the field trailed around in order.

But when the safety car pulled off it was immediately clear that Schumacher was going to be unstoppable.

Villeneuve, who had been on pole, managed to stay in front for two laps before Schumacher swept past him as if the Canadian had stopped. Within two laps Schumacher, who has already won three times on this most difficult of race tracks, had pulled out a 22 second lead which by lap nine had increased to over thirty seconds.

"If it had stayed dry we would have struggled, but we made the right tyre choice. This is just a fantastic win," said Schumacher.

"It was a right decision to send the pace car out at the start because the conditions were very difficult."

Villeneuve, clearly not enjoying the wet, found himself slipping further and further back as Fisichella, who is wanted next season by Benetton, put his Jordan into second place with Hakkinen in third.



Finnish Formula One driver Mika Hakkinen runs into the pits after he crashed his car during the warm-up session at the Belgian Grand Prix in Spa-Francorchamps, southern Belgium August 24. Hakkinen crashed for the second time in two days but was not injured (Reuters photo)

As the sun began to dry out the key question was when to change on to dry tyres.

Villeneuve made the error of trying to copy Schumacher and go on to intermediate's, a mixed wet-dry tyre. It proved to be costly as the Williams driver desperately tries to keep in touch with the German with only five laps left.

Five laps later he was back in the pits to put on slicks and found himself trailing in 14th place and no chance of winning.

Schumacher meanwhile was in a race of his own and at one stage had stretched his lead to over 60 seconds but refused to be overconfident about taking his third driver's title.

"Leading by 12 points with five races to go is a nice margin, but it's still not a definite situation for the championship. Things

can change very quickly."

For Fisichella it was finally a just reward for all the work he has done with Jordan this season as he collected his best ever Grand Prix result.

"I can't believe it. I am very happy, it's incredible. Now my target is victory," he said.

It was also an impressive third place for Hakkinen who had a nightmare pre-race build up.

He overcame a horrific 200mph crash during Saturday morning's unofficial practice.

The Finn, told on Friday that he was being retained by McLaren-Mercedes for next season, slammed into a guard-rail after the left rear tyre of his car suddenly shot off.

The 28-year-old managed to scramble out of the car before lying down near the Les Combes section of the circuit while waiting to be taken to the medical

centre for a mandatory check-up.

He also crashed on Sunday morning's practice session.

But he will have to wait until early next week to discover if his third place is going to be confirmed.

Late Saturday evening he was stripped of his fifth place on the grid after his fuel was deemed illegal.

He was reinstated on Sunday morning after the team appealed but race stewards said further tests will be carried out and a final decision taken later in the week.

"It was a good result after all that had happened this week. I had a slight problem in the car and I was more worried about staying third than trying to get second. It was a matter of finishing the race," said the Finn.

Real upset Barcelona's Van Gaal

MADRID (AFP) — Spanish champions Real Madrid ground bitter rivals Barcelona into the dust at the Bernabeu stadium here Saturday night, humiliating the Catalan club 4-1 to win the Spanish Super Cup 5-3 on aggregate.

Teenage striker Raul was a Real hero, scoring the first two goals to set up a memorable triumph.

It was a bitter baptism for new Barca coach Luis Van Gaal, who took over in the summer from former England boss Bobby Robson, demoted to a post as director of recruitment after failing to land the title last season and "only" winning the Cup Winners Cup and Spanish Cup.

But for Jupp Heynckes, who cut his managerial teeth at Bayern Munich, it was the perfect start to his stewardship of Real, whom he joined in the summer from Tenerife after Fabio Capello returned to Milan.

Real took full advantage of Barcelona's uncertainty at the back, which owed much to the absence of Portuguese international goalkeeper Victor Baia, out for three months following knee surgery.

His replacement, veteran Dutchman Ruud Hesp, was all at sea as Real launched wave after wave of attacks. 19-year-old Raul scoring the first on 42 minutes.

The live-wire striker also snatched the second nine minutes after the restart, brilliantly timing his run through the centre to slot home a pass from Pedja Mijatovic, who orchestrated Real's second-half domination.

Dutchman Clarence Seedorf should have made it three, but his close range effort bounced back off the hapless Hesp only for Mijatovic to react like a rapier and slide home the rebound on 57 minutes.

The stylish Seedorf was not to be denied, however, and he clipped home the fourth in the closing stages before Giovanni lashed home a late, late consolation following a left-wing corner at the other end.



German Alexander Luderitz swims during the mens 4x100M relay medley heats in Seville August 24. The German team clocked 3:43.11, the best time for the final later in the day (Reuters photo)



French Roxana Maracineanu starts the women's 200m backstroke heats in Seville. Maracineanu set the second position of the heats clocking 2:13.78 (Reuters photo)

Business as usual at Juventus

TURIN (AFP) — Team coach Marcello Lippi is convinced that Juventus have resumed normal service by beating Vicenza 3-0 in the Italian Super Cup.

After losing the European Cup final at the end of last season, and missing out on the Berlusconi Trophy last week, Juventus finally got their arms busy again here on Saturday night.

"The most important thing about this match is that we haven't got out of the habit of lifting trophies up towards the sky," Lippi said.

"It was a good performance, we beat tough, well-organised opponents who were closing down the spaces throughout the first half and giving nothing away. We were staying in the middle, though, which is easier for them."

"However, in the second half we started playing well and everything went a great deal better. Now we've just got to continue like this."

The victory was also a personal triumph for Juventus' new striker Filippo "Pippo" Inzaghi, recently ticked-off by teammates for allegedly saying they should build the team around him.

Inzaghi, who claims he was mis-reported, scored twice in



Italian Juventus player Antonio Conte (L) and compatriot Massimo Ambrosini of Vicenza fight for the ball during their Italian Cup match in Turin (Reuters photo)

the opening 10 minutes after the re-start and teed-up the third for skipper Antonio Conte.

"I've never had any problems with the team or individual players," he insisted.

"And I've proved that on the pitch. I'm lucky. I'm used to responding to things like that by scoring goals."

Inzaghi was the Serie A's top-scorer last season with Atalanta, before making his

\$11 million move to the champions.

"I'm not interested in being the top scorer again this year," he said. "At Juventus we've got other objectives — cups and trophies — and I

hope that this one is just the start of many."

"Juventus are a great team, my job is to try and keep them that way."

It was also a night to remember for Conte. The midfielder missed most of last season — starting with the Intercontinental Cup victory in Tokyo — after injuring cruciate ligaments.

"It really is a dream come true," he said. "It makes up for so much heartache and so many disappointments. That night in Tokyo, I was in bed with tears in my eyes and my knee swollen up."

"But I knew that I would get back to what I was before."

Conte's return to form was meanwhile equally good news for Italy coach Cesare Maldini, as he plots England's downfall in their crucial World Cup qualifier next October.

Though well-covered in defence and attack, Maldini's choice is limited in midfield — where the positions are occupied by foreign players in most of the top clubs.

The only disappointment here on Saturday night was the crowd, with just 16,000 mustering in the cavernous 70,000 capacity Delle Alpi stadium.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Green dethrones Joppy

NEW YORK (AFP) — Julio Cesar Green became the new WBA middleweight champion when he beat defending champion William Joppy on points here on Saturday night. It was a stunning upset for Joppy, considered one of the best middleweight fighters around. The flashy Joppy had only been filling in for WBO champion Lonnie Bradley who had pulled out after suffering a detached retina. "I think my hand is broken but I still think I did enough to win it," said a visibly upset Joppy afterwards. "I want a rematch," added the American, coming to grips with the first defeat of his career.

Joao Pinto on his way

LISBON (AFP) — Benfica are set to offload star striker Joao Pinto to Barcelona for around \$25 million. Publico reported on Saturday. The move could happen within hours or days," a club source said. Benfica have already turned down a \$14-million offer from Deportivo La Coruna.

Mazinho staying at Vigo

VIGO (AFP) — Brazilian striker Iomar do Nascimento "Mazinho" has signed an extended contract with Celta Vigo keeping him at the Spanish club until 2000, officials said. Any club looking to sign Mazinho, who arrived in Vigo from Valencia at the start of the 1996-97 season, while he is under contract will have to pay

around \$13 million instead of the \$2.6 million previously stipulated. Italy's Lazio had expressed interest in securing Mazinho's services.

Davenport takes title

ATLANTA (AFP) — Lindsay Davenport of the United States overpowered unseeded Sandrine Testud of France 6-4, 6-1 here Saturday to win the \$450,000-WTA Tour U.S. Hardcourt Championships. Davenport, the fourth seed and playing on the court where the 21-year-old tasted Olympic success last year, needed just 59 minutes to polish off her opponent and take her 11th career singles title. It was the world number seven's fourth win this year after Oklahoma City, Indian Wells and Amelia Island. Testud, 25, earlier in the week had broken into the top 20 in the WTA rankings for the first time.

LA Galaxy in final

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Mexico's Cruz Azul will play Los Angeles Galaxy here on Sunday in the final of the CONCACAF Cup after Cruz Azul beat fellow Mexicans Chivas 3-2 while Los Angeles ousted U.S. champions Washington United 1-0. Cruz Azul were left to sweat on the outcome of their game after they almost squandered a 3-0 lead in the final five minutes. Substitute Hector Adomat's third goal proved the decider. Los Angeles had a long-range piler from U.S. international Cobi Jones to thank for their win.

Karlsruhe h

25 (AFP) — Early stage pace-setters were hit for six by a goal-laden team in a goal-laden game which also saw Japan champions Dortmund beat five goals past neighbours Bochum.

It was promoted Karlsruhe who were the loudest at Karlsruhe fall from grace as they moved to the top of the table after a 4-1 victory in the UEFA Cup over Schalke 04 with two goals from Olaf Marschall.

One from Swiss international Ciriaco Sforza, another from Bremen and Bayern Munich coach Otto Reihagel, have ten points after four games to go with five teams behind.

Reihagel was quick to praise his squad after a comprehensive victory. The players are focused, going with great passion and all riding on the confidence they gained from the Munich match (a 1-0 win for Bayern Munich).

Klaus Toppmoller's 6-1 win over Schalke came after a 3-0 victory for Germany in the quarter-finals. Northern Ireland put the visitors out in the fifth minute.

Erk Meijer equalised in the quarter-hour and the minutes later, the floodgates opened in the second period, when the visitors blasted four goals inside 20 minutes.

The UFF Kirsten getting the match Hans-Peter Leininger and Brazilian Paulo Roberto Rink completing

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LIAR LIAR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238

PLAZA

Tom Bringer ... in

THE SUBSTITUTE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

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U.S. Open women's top seed Martina Hingis (R) talks with unseeded Andre Agassi, during a skills competition at the annual Arthur Ashe Kid's Day at the U.S. Open. Play at the U.S. Open begins today (Reuters photo)

U.S. Open starts today; Sampras bids for 3rd Slam of the year

NEW YORK (AFP) — Defending champion Pete Sampras will be aiming to win the U.S. Open for the fifth time when the last Grand Slam tournament of the year begins on Monday at Flushing Meadows.

Although he has only just celebrated his 26th birthday, Sampras was champion in 1990, 1993, 1995 and 1996 and will be looking for his third straight win in his national championship.

Top-seeded Sampras, a dominant figure in the sport this year, is gunning for his 11th Grand Slam title, which would place him just one behind the record of 12 held by Australian Roy Emerson. He opens against a qualifier.

The American is also aiming to win three Grand Slams in a calendar year for the first time, having already won the Australian, Open and Wimbledon.

Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten is the only other player apart from Sampras to have won a Grand Slam this year, scoring a memorable triumph in the French Open.

Sampras is seeded to meet fellow American Michael Chang in the final, but Chang has a less-than-impressive record in recent major tournaments.

Croatian Goran Ivanisevic, who could meet Sampras in the semis, is likely to prove a bigger stumbling block if he advances that far, but the big-serving Croatian's temperament can be suspect on the big stage and he has never won a Grand Slam singles title.

Two unseeded Americans, Andre Agassi and Jim Courier, loom as dangerous floaters in the draw.

Both are former world No.1s and Agassi won the title as recently as 1994.

The moody Agassi, coming back into form after a dismal start to the year, will play compatriot Steve Campbell in his opener and could meet No.3 seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia in a third-round match-up of mouth-watering potential.

Agassi has missed the opening three Slams of the year, while Courier, an equally unpredictable character, has seen his world ranking slip to 26 but remains capable of beating anyone ranked in the top 10.

Britain's hopes of success have been boosted by recent triumphs by both Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, while Australia has high hopes of its rising stars Mark Philippoussis

and Pat Rafter.

Canadian-born Rusedski faces American David Wheaton in the opening round, while Henman has a potentially disastrous first-round meeting with fifth-seeded Thomas Muster of Austria.

Swiss teen prodigy Martina Hingis is a warm favourite for the women's singles title having already won the Australian Open and Wimbledon this year. She also reached the French Open final, where she lost to talented Croatian Iva Majoli, and last year's U.S. Open winner Steffi Graf is out injured.

Hingis' rivals will include second seed Monica Seles, Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic, Majoli and the infuriatingly inconsistent French player Mary Pierce.

The relaxed Hingis, still only 16, has prepared for the Open by horse riding and roller skating and is looking to make up for her semi-final loss Graf last year, while saying she is under no pressure.

"Of course it's different now I'm No.1," Hingis said. "But it's not the first time I've gone into a Grand Slam tournament in this position."

Metz stun PSG

PARIS (AFP) — Metz won the top of the table clash in France on Friday, beating Paris Saint Germain 2-1 to take a three point lead after four matches.

French international Robert Pires gave the hosts the lead with a penalty on 64 minutes and Bruno Rodriguez, with his fourth of the season, made the game safe with six minutes remaining.

Former Milan star Marco Simone pulled one back seconds from the end for PSG, but it was too little, too late.

Bastia are third in the table four points off the pace. But they missed a chance to grab second after they were held 1-1 at home by Chateauroux, who also drew at Monaco recently.

Ermin Siljak equalised late on after Ferdinand Coly had put the visitors ahead on three minutes.

Champions Monaco slumped to a shock 2-1 defeat away to Rennes, who scored their first victory of the campaign, thanks to early goals from Nicolas Gousse. Thierry Henry scored a second-half consolation goal for Monaco, who are already eight points off the pace.

Elsewhere, Lens moved up to fourth when they shocked Marseille 3-2 at the Stade Velodrome with Montenegrin striker Anton Drobnyak, formerly with Bastia, scoring a hat-trick.

Newly-promoted Toulouse's early season bubble burst when they crashed to their first defeat, 4-0, at Montpellier, for whom Ibrahim Bakayoko scored twice.

Stephane Guivarc'h scored after only two minutes as Auxerre beat Guingamp 1-0 at home while Cocard scored twice as Lyon won 3-1 at Le Havre.

Jordan working towards Pan-Arab Special Olympics Council

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan is urging countries of the region to take serious measures towards establishing a Pan-Arab Special Olympics Council, Vice President of Global Field Resources for Special Olympics International Dennis Brueggemann Sunday told the Jordan Times.

"Jordan is witnessing an impressive programme geared towards the mentally handicapped and we saw that Jordan can be the starting point for the region," Brueggemann said. In a meeting held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid with the participation of delegates from Bahrain, Egypt and Lebanon, Jordan's Special Olympics Committee started laying the foundation for a five-year plan to establish a council with members from the Arab World.

First initiated by Her Majesty Queen Noor in 1986 with the care and support of His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Ra'd, the Special Olympics Committee has done a lot to improve the lives of the mentally handicapped individuals in Jordan.

"There is a big number of people with mental disabilities with no special care. Their number is also growing and we are targeting those with special abilities through sports," Brueggemann said. "Sports can be the key to progress in their lives," he added.

"This programme is able to give the society a clear picture of what the handicapped can do," he pointed out. Jordan can host a Special Olympic Games in the near future," he added.

"Financial support is not the only factor. Everyone can help by supporting the programme with their time and dedication," he added.

Jordan's Special Olympic team is targeting the Special Olympics in 2000 in the Netherlands.

"Jordan's gold medal in roller skating and silver in ice skating in Toronto 1997 Winter Games displayed what Jordan can achieve," National Director for Special Olympics of Jordan Yasser Salem told the Jordan Times.

"We are working, with the help of Prince Ra'd, to upgrade the level of handicapped sports in Jordan," he said.

"At first we faced several problems with some families, but after seeing what their child can achieve they gave him all the support he needs," he said.

The committee is also targeting the families. "A family with an open mind, and awareness towards their child can be an important factor for the child's achievements," Brueggemann said.

"Public awareness is a helping factor. The will to help and understand the aspects that would make the handicapped person's life a normal one is something indispensable," he added.

Angry Bergkamp fires Gunners to victory

LONDON (AFP) — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said Southampton only had themselves to blame after Dutch star Dennis Bergkamp inspired the Gunners to a 3-1 win at the Dell on Saturday.

Arsenal joined defending champions Manchester United, Leicester City and Blackburn Rovers at the top of the table with seven points from three matches.

United hit the woodwork three times away to Leicester but had to settle for a 0-0 draw, while Blackburn rallied to draw 1-1 at home to Liverpool and Newcastle beat Aston Villa 1-0.

At the Dell, Bergkamp was given some rough treatment by the Saints defence, his temper boiling

over when he escaped with only a booking after flinging his arm into the face of substitute David Hughes.

But either side of that incident the Dutch striker produced two killer strikes to lift the title hopeful Londoners into second place in the fledgling table behind leaders Blackburn only on goal difference.

"Maybe what they tried with him was the worst thing they could've done," said Wenger.

"But I like to see it. When he was frustrated at being fouled he showed his determination."

"By his reaction with the goals he showed he doesn't accept that at all, that he's ready to revolt against it. That's bad news for our

opponents."

Elsewhere, Roy Evans tried to shrug off the disappointment of seeing Martin Dahlin's late equaliser for Blackburn cancel out 17-year-old Michael Owen's first half strike and deny Liverpool their first win of the new season.

Evans said: "I feel that it is two points lost because we created more clear-cut chances than Blackburn."

"If we continue to show the same effort and passion we will be okay, because we know we have the ability."

Rovers boss Roy Hodgson said: "It was an excellent game of football — you won't see much better football than that which was played in the first half."

"And it's nice to be still top of the table. But I'd rather be top of the table after 37 games and be four points clear with one game still to play."

Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson was left ruing his side's lack of fire power as the reigning champions drew a blank in the goalless draw against Leicester at Filbert Street.

United were without first choice strikers Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Andy Cole and Ferguson said: "For the first 15 minutes we were a real mess at the back and could have been 3-0 down but for the brilliance of (United goalkeeper) Peter Schmeichel."

Karlsruhe hit for six as Kaiserslautern go top

BONN (AFP) — Early Bundesliga pace-setters Karlsruhe were hit for six by Leverkusen in a goal-laden German League programme Sunday which also saw European champions Dortmund blast five goals past near-neighbours Bochum.

But it was promoted Kaiserslautern who were laughing the loudest at Karlsruhe's fall from grace as they moved to the top of the table by blasting UEFA Cup holders Schalke 04 with two goals from Olaf Marschall and one from Swiss international Ciriaco Sforza. Kaiserslautern, coached by former Bremen and Bayern Munich coach Otto Rehhagel, have ten points from their four games to date, with five teams behind them on seven.

And Rehhagel was quick to praise his squad after their comprehensive victory.

"The players are focused, playing with great passion and still riding on the confidence they gained from the opening Munich match (a 1-0 win at Bayern Munich)." Leverkusen's 6-1 win over Karlsruhe came after Thomas Haessler, so impressive for Germany in midweek against Northern Ireland, had put the visitors ahead in the fifth minute.

But Erik Meijer equalised on the quarter-hour and Nico Kovac put them ahead seven minutes later.

The floodgates opened in the second period, when Leverkusen blasted four goals inside 20 minutes. Haessler's international colleague Ulf Kirsten getting two with Hans-Peter Lehnhoff and Brazilian Paulo

European champions Dortmund underlined their title bid with a 5-2 win over Bochum, sparked by goals from Jorg Heinrich, Heiko Herrlich, two from Andreas Moeller and another from Stephane Chapuisat, who was on target for Switzerland in midweek.

Darius Wosz and Peter Peschel hit consolation

goals for the visitors.

Werder Bremen, who sacked coach Hans-Juergen Doerner on Wednesday after a poor start to the campaign and two hammerings in friendlies in Spain, continued their dismal run with a 3-0 defeat at Arminia Bielefeld, veteran striker Stefan Kuntz grabbing the third goal late on.

Stuttgart, meanwhile, cantered to a 3-0 win at Duisburg and Borussia Moenchengladbach, who dropped controversial Stefan Effenberg, blasted Cologne 4-1.

Bayern Munich, who have struggled to hit form so far this season and standing in midtable, play at Hamburg on Sunday.

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INVITATION TO TENDER NO. (3/97) SUPPLY OF (370) TONNES TINPLATE

The Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company of Jordan (AMPCO) announces the Tender No. (3/97) that includes supply of (370) tonnes lacquered tinplate to produce cans to be filled by Tomato Paste.

Copies of the tender documents can be obtained for the nonrefundable price of JD70 (i.e. USD99), during working hours (8:00 a.m.) to (2:00 p.m.), from the secretary of the Tender Committee at AMPCO head office.

AMMAN - ABDOUN - M. ALI JANAH STR. TEL: 819161 FAX: 819164 TLX: 23796

Tender should be submitted to the head of the Tender Committee at AMPCO before September 30, 1997 (2 p.m. Local time).

GENERAL MANAGER

Iraq illegally exporting gasoil — oil traders

DUBAI (AFP) — Iraq is illegally exporting gasoil despite the easing of U.N. sanctions with the implementation of the "oil-for-food" deal, oil traders and Western military sources in the Gulf said Sunday.

Iraq exports around 5,000 tonnes of gasoil per day, allowing it to pocket around \$200,000 daily, said several oil traders who buy the Iraqi refined product, a form of diesel, in ports around the Gulf.

The gasoil is loaded in the southern Iraqi port of Basra onto barges that ship it to oil tankers in the southern Gulf — off the coast of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) or the Sultanate of Oman — through Iran's waters, they told Agence France Presse (AFP), asking not to be named.

Some 15 barges, which can each carry around 300 tonnes of gasoil, go through Iranian waters daily in order to avoid a U.S.-led multinational fleet enforcing U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq

since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The multinational fleet sails only in international waters, and cannot enter Iranian waters. Basra lies at the mouth of the Shatt Al Arab waterway, close to Iranian waters.

A Western military source involved in the monitoring confirmed the methods used to smuggle gasoil and the amounts involved.

And a shipping official in the Gulf told AFP, "overall, the smuggling of Iraqi gasoil is fairly constant, it did not decrease with the 'oil-for-food' deal."

U.N. Security Council resolution 986, known as "oil for food," allows Iraq to export two billion dollars of crude oil every six months to finance purchases of food and medicine.

The deal was first implemented in December 1996 and was renewed in June for a second six-month term. The captain of a 400-tonne barge involved in the smuggling told AFP that he pays

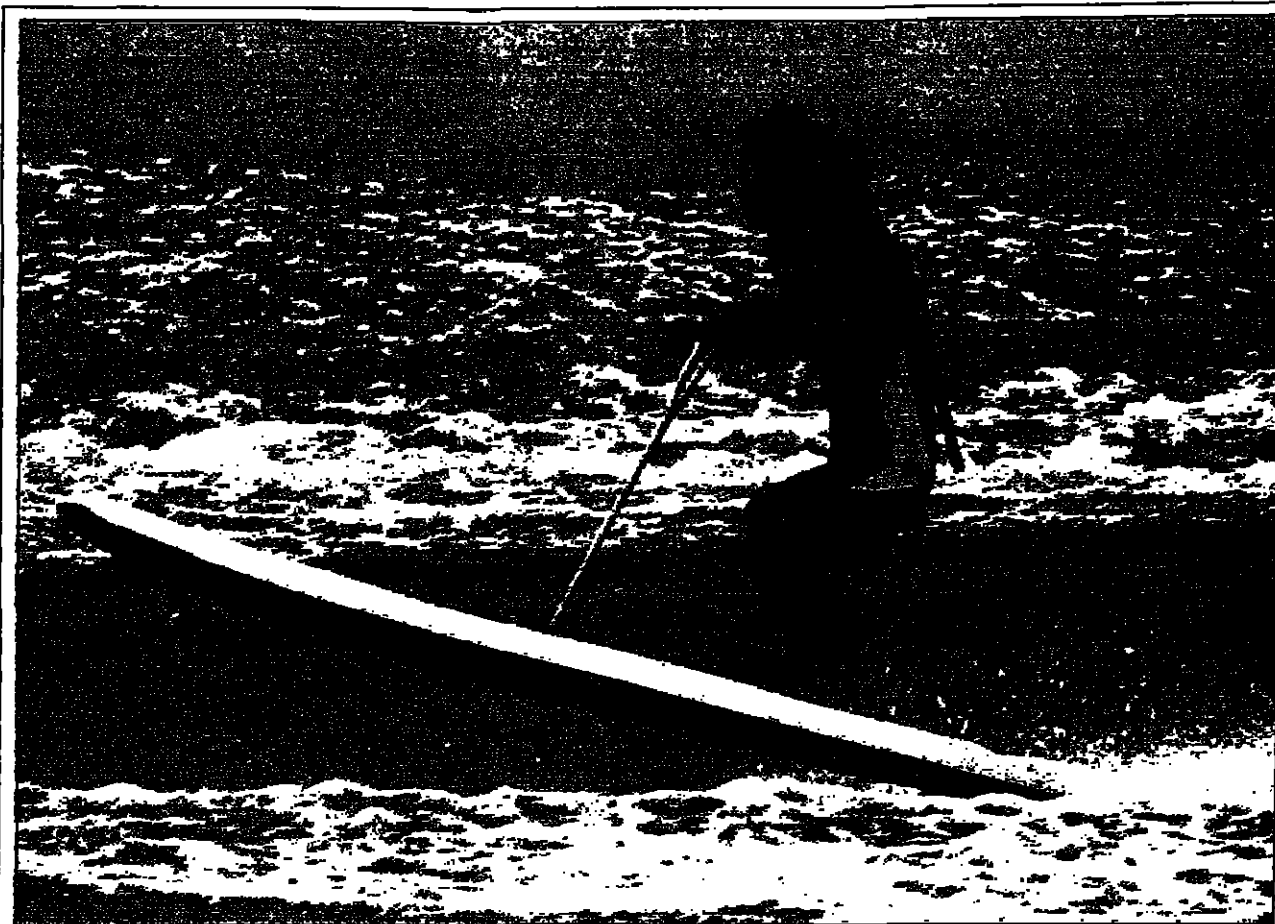
\$40 per tonne of gasoil in Iraq, and that the Iranian authorities levy \$60 per tonne as transit fee.

"In all, the tonne's cost is \$100. I sell it at \$120, making \$8,000 in profit each trip," he explained, adding that he is paid in cash on delivery.

The barges unload their cargo into tankers chartered by trading companies which later sell the gasoil at just under the market price of \$140, claiming the product to be of Iranian origin.

The captain said it takes him around ten days to make a round trip. "On the way back, I wait for the allied navy ships to go away before moving out from Iranian waters and getting to an oil tanker that's waiting."

The U.S., British and Canadian ships enforcing the U.N. embargo on Iraq find it hard to check the smuggling, as thousands of tankers, cargos and wooden barge sail everyday in the Gulf.



SURFING FOR FAME: Japanese monkey Lilly leaps over the waves during a performance Saturday on the Tonegawa River east of Tokyo. The monkey business of the two-year-old Japanese Macaque and partner Momoko has become a top crowdpleaser at watersports shows around Japan (Reuters photo)

China promises Netanyahu not to sell atomic reactor to Iran

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he received assurances Sunday from Chinese Deputy Prime Minister Li Lanchang that Beijing would not sell a nuclear reactor to Iran.

"I was told that China and its prime minister had made an important decision not to supply the building materials for a nuclear reactor to Iran," Mr. Netanyahu told Israel radio after meeting Mr. Li during a stopover in Beijing.

"This was of course welcomed by us," the Israeli leader added. "It is important. We hope this can be used as a sign by other countries regarding their relations with Iran."

Mr. Netanyahu met Mr. Li during a brief stop-over in China en route to Japan. Israel has expressed increasing worry over suspected attempts by Iran to build nuclear weapons.

A U.S. commander in the Persian Gulf predicted last month that Tehran would have nuclear weapons around the turn of the century and warned that an Iranian military build up in the Gulf has increased the risk of an incident.

Iran has tried to purchase nuclear know-how from several countries but insists it will be for "peaceful purposes."

The Islamist government in Iran has never recognised Israel's right to exist, although Israeli officials have expressed hope that relations could improve under the country's relatively moderate new president, Mohammad Khatami.

Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Li met for nearly an hour to discuss "political, economic and cultural issues," an Israeli diplomatic source told Agence France Presse.

Mr. Li, who is also a member of the Communist Party's politburo, invited the Israeli prime minister to visit in 1998 and Mr. Netanyahu indicated he would "probably" accept, the source said.

Mr. Netanyahu flew on to Tokyo for a four-day official visit. He then visits South Korea for two days and is scheduled to make a brief stopover in Azerbaijan on his way home.

China and Israel established diplomatic ties in 1992.

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U.S. embassy reissues warning to Americans in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (AFP) — The U.S. embassy in Riyadh has reiterated a warning to the 40,000 Americans living in Saudi Arabia to be on their guard for new terrorist attacks.

"The American embassy wishes to remind Americans in Saudi Arabia that it continues to receive reports indicating possible surveillance or probes of U.S. military and government facilities suggesting that the planning for terrorist actions against U.S. interests in Saudi Arabia continues unabated," the embassy said in a recorded telephone message.

"We urge Americans to maintain the highest level of vigilance and alert. We strongly encourage them to exercise caution, to reduce travel within the kingdom and report any suspect activity," it said.

It also advised U.S. nationals to beware of letters or parcels from unknown senders.

A U.S. embassy spokeswoman said the message was issued on August 20.

"It is a routine re-issue of the former message because new Americans are coming to the kingdom and people have been away for the summer," she said, adding that there had not been any specific new threats.

"There is nothing new," she said.

Americans in Saudi Arabia have been targeted by two bomb attacks since 1995, which have been claimed by shadowy groups calling on U.S. troops to leave the Gulf.

In November 1995 five Americans and two Indians died in a car bomb attack on a U.S. military training building in Riyadh.

In June 1996, a truck bomb exploded next to a military housing complex near Dhahran, eastern Saudi Arabia, killing 19 Americans.

After the bombing, U.S. troops were moved to a high-security base in the desert south of Riyadh and the U.S. embassy has regularly issued warnings to its citizens in the kingdom.

The last warning came in March when the embassy was concerned at comments from Osama Ben Laden, a Saudi Islamist known to fund Arab militants, threatening Americans he described as "occupying" his country.

Ben Laden, who has been stripped of his Saudi nationality and now lives in Afghanistan, called not only for U.S. troops to leave Saudi Arabia, but also the 40,000 civilians who work in the oil industry, hospitals, airports and U.S. companies in the desert kingdom.

There are an estimated 20,000 American troops deployed in the Middle East, including some 5,000 in Saudi Arabia.

Kibbutz' plan of monkey farm for science met with uproar

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A southern Israeli kibbutz sparked an uproar from animal rights groups Sunday when news leaked out that it planned to raise monkeys for science experiments in the U.S.

The Or Haner kibbutz, or collective farm, near the Gaza Strip is negotiating a contract with a U.S. firm to raise hundreds of monkeys for use in scientific experiments, the Yediot Ahronot newspaper reported Sunday.

The newspaper said the kibbutz had already built the cages needed to raise the animals.

The press reports prompted an immediate protest from the Israeli Animal Rights Association.

"We will not allow these monkeys to end up in U.S. army laboratories," said the association spokesman, Etti Altman.

Or Haner residents were nonplussed by the outcry. "What's all the noise about, we raise calves and cattle that end up in people's plates, is that better?" said kibbutz secretary Moshe Dardik, to the Yediot.

Netanyahu seeks to reassure Asian investors not to worry over turmoil

TOKYO (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Tokyo Sunday with a message for Japanese investors not to be scared of doing business in Israel because of the present turmoil there.

Accompanied by Finance Minister Yacov Neeman and a big delegation of Israeli business leaders, Mr. Netanyahu spends three days in Japan before travelling to South Korea Wednesday on a similar mission. He returns home Thursday.

In a sign of the importance of the visits for Israel's flagging economy, Mr. Netanyahu went ahead with his trip despite mounting tension with Palestinians.

On the eve of his departure, Israeli-backed militia sources had reported Israeli troops killed three Hizbollah guerrillas in South Lebanon Saturday in fierce clashes that included air raids and artillery exchanges.

The attacks followed a breakdown in talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat since a July 30 suicide bombing in Jerusalem brought Middle East peace efforts to a halt.

In an interview with Reuters last week on his Asian trip, Mr. Netanyahu said he would assure investors in Japan and South Korea that peace would come to Israel despite present setbacks.

"The first thing that I want to say is very clear — we're going to make peace. We'll achieve it," Mr. Netanyahu said in the interview.

However, Japanese officials have signalled that words will not be enough in convincing investors to put sizeable amounts of money into Israel at the present time.

The officials said Japan was keen to strengthen economic ties with Israel but wanted improvements in the Middle East's political environment.

"This does not mean we will refuse to deal with Israel unless there is peace in the region. It means we want Israel to be very serious about the entire peace process," a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said last week.

Israeli exports to Japan in 1996 totalled \$1.1 billion, 62 per cent of which were diamonds. Imports were \$1.08 billion.

In the first half of 1997 exports slipped to \$559 million from \$638 million a year earlier while imports fell to \$558.5 million from \$560 million, the Israel Export Institute said.

Less than three years ago Japan and South Korea gave a warm welcome to the late Yitzhak Rabin, the first Israeli prime minister to visit either country.

Rabin was one of the architects of the historic 1993 peace treaty with the Palestinians, which helped open diplomatic and commercial doors for Israel not only in the Middle East but also as far off as southeast Asia.

Heavily dependent on Arab oil, Japan and South Korea had been reluctant until then to do business with Israel.

But since Mr. Netanyahu's headline Likud Party ousted the dovish Labour Party from power in 1996, Israeli-Palestinian relations have deteriorated.

It remains to be seen whether Mr. Netanyahu can persuade Asian companies to invest in a region that is still perceived as highly unstable.

Israeli officials say Mr. Netanyahu aims to boost not only Japanese investment but also promote joint ventures between Japanese and Israeli firms.

Possible projects for Japanese investment or joint ventures include a high-speed railway, an offshore airport and advanced irrigation systems.

Mr. Netanyahu is likely to raise his talks with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto the lack of direct air links with Japan.

Japan has said the lack of space at Tokyo's Narita Airport and need for additional security to protect Israel's national carrier El Al Airlines has stood in the way of an aviation pact.

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U.S. hints at interest in ties with Iran

WASHINGTON (R) — With one eye on the emerging oil boom in Central Asia, the U.S. is dropping fresh hints of an interest in improving ties with Iran, where a new government, including some moderates, was approved last week.

The signals — of little more than a readiness to respond should Iran decide to shift its foreign policy course — were being put out more in hope than expectation.

Previous approaches since relations were severed in 1980 during the long crisis over the seizure of U.S. diplomatic hostages in Tehran have been rejected by an Iranian leadership that still sees Washington as "the great Satan."

But the unexpected victory of reformer Mohammad Khatami in presidential elections in May, and now the block approval of his cabinet by the Iranian parliament have revived U.S. interest in watching which way things are going in Tehran.

"To the extent that the election of President Khatami and the approval of his cabinet indicate that the will and welfare of the people of Iran will be reflected by its government, we would welcome that," said State Department spokesman James Rubin.

Roger Kangas, a scholar at the Central Asia Institute of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, said, "people are taking this seriously."

"There is a sense of 'will there be new developments or even just new choices of words?' Likewise I suspect Iran is looking for the same from the U.S.," Mr. Kangas said.

Significant appointments by Mr. Khatami include new

Culture Minister Ataollah Mohajerani, a relative liberal, and Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, who spent years living in the U.S. in his former role as ambassador to the U.N.

Iran's exiled opposition and many Western scholars argue, however, that the new "moderate" image is a sham and that neither Mr. Khatami nor any government he appoints have any power to change Iran's foreign policy.

This, they say, is controlled by Iran's supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and by anti-western extremists loyal to him. Any changes are likely to involve only domestic affairs, these analysts say.

One prominent Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Ahmad Janati, told a prayer meeting last Friday, "governments come and go but our principles stay intact. These principles are Islam, Islamic revolution and not giving in to Israel and America as long as they treat us with hostility."

U.S. analysts say the administration has to tread with extreme caution in the minefield of relations with Iran, a country seen by Israel and its powerful lobby in the United States as the greatest threat to the Jewish state.

U.S. conditions for a dialogue with Iran, reaffirmed by officials last week, include agreement by Tehran to discuss its alleged support for terrorism and pursuit of nuclear weapons and its hostility to the Middle East peace process.

Iran insists that Washington must drop the terrorism charge.

While the rhetoric has remained unchanged, analysts say that what is new is the growing importance of

Iran's northern neighbours, former Soviet Republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia who are sitting on as much as 200 billion barrels of oil reserves.

This fact, some analysts believe, could eventually lead the U.S. to see Iran less from the perspective of the Middle East and more in its Central Asian context.

Iran, a major oil power, sits astride one of the key routes for piping out of these reserves, which oil companies are now ready to bring to market.

"There is a general push for strengthening ties with Iran in the region," Mr. Kangas said. "You can't avoid Iran. These countries associate with Iran. Pipelines are going to go through."

The United States says it wants to see orderly development of the oilfields. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, in a speech last month, called for efforts to avoid a 19th century-style "great game" of competition between the major powers over Central Asian oil.

Already Washington has decided, controversially, that it will not stand in the way of a plan by Turkey to import natural gas from Turkmenistan via a pipeline through Iran.

The administration ruled last month that the project did not violate the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), which penalises foreign companies that invest in the oil or gas sectors in Iran or Libya. U.S. companies are banned from dealing with Iran.

While Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other officials insisted the decision was not meant as an olive branch to Iran, some commentators said it appeared to be dictated by commercial concerns.

Swiss host 100th anniversary of birth of Zionism

BASLE (R) — Undeterred by an ongoing row between Switzerland and world Jewish groups, the city of Basle is this month hosting the 100th anniversary of an historic meeting that launched the drive to create Israel.

The first Zionist congress in August 1897 is credited with transforming scattered 19th century calls for a Jewish homeland into a single political movement that helped change the face of the 20th century.

Switzerland's second-biggest city is the scene of exhibitions, plays and podium discussions as part of a programme culminating in a formal ceremony on August 31 attended by the heads of the Israeli and Swiss parliaments.

The spotlight will fall on Theodore Herzl, a Viennese dandy and journalist turned Jewish activist who organised the congress and led the Zionist movement until his death in 1904 at the age of 44.

"If I were to summarise the Basle congress in a few words... I would say this: In Basle I have founded the Jewish state," he wrote in his diary three days after the

August 29-31 gathering. "Herzl was to be proved right," wrote historian Heiko Haumann of Basle University, who organised this year's main exhibition on the anniversary and edited the accompanying book. "The First Zionist Congress in 1897."

The Zionist movement grew from humble beginnings to become a factor of historical importance, and little more than 50 years had passed as, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to the foundation of Israel — and the division of

Palestine," Mr. Haumann wrote.

Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948. Jewish criticism of Swiss World War II role the Basle organisers want to keep the ceremonies separate from international criticism, led by world Jewish groups, of Switzerland's World War II role as a neutral banking centre open to the surrounding axis powers, including Nazi Germany.

"These ceremonies were first proposed in 1993, before this discussion started,"

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Palestine," Mr. Haumann wrote.

Basle is this month hosting the 100th anniversary of an historic meeting that launched the drive to create Israel.

The first Zionist congress in August 1897 is credited with transforming scattered 19th century calls for a Jewish homeland into a single political movement that helped change the face of the 20th century.

Switzerland's second-biggest city is the scene of exhibitions, plays and podium discussions as part of a programme culminating in a formal ceremony on August 31 attended by the heads of the Israeli and Swiss parliaments.

The spotlight will fall on Theodore Herzl, a Viennese dandy and journalist turned Jewish activist who organised the congress and led the Zionist movement until his death in 1904 at the age of 44.

"If I were to summarise the Basle congress in a few words... I would say this: In Basle I have founded the Jewish state," he wrote in his diary three days after the

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Credibility of H.K. surgeon leaves a lot to be said

HONG KONG (R) — A Hong Kong surgeon removed a young girl's fallopian tube, thinking it was her appendix, in the latest in a spate of alarming blunders in the territory's hospitals, local newspapers reported Sunday.

"We all make mistakes," head of surgery John Wong was quoted as saying in the Sunday Morning Post. It was not known whether the girl's family planned to take legal action against the hospital. Earlier in March, another woman had her right fallopian tube cut at the hospital during an appendectomy.

U.K. pilot suspended after 5-year-old girl takes controls

LONDON (R) — A British Airways pilot and his co-pilot have been suspended after reports that a five-year-old girl operated controls on a plane packed with holidaymakers, a British Airways spokeswoman said Sunday. The News of the World newspaper reported that the girl had sat on the pilot's knee and pressed a button to make the plane turn during a flight to London from the south of France.

Bay Watch captivates jailers

BERNALILLO (R) — Six prisoners escaped from a New Mexico county jail as distracted guards and other inmates were appreciating the scantily clad female lifeguards on the television series "Baywatch," officials said. The prisoners escaped by cutting a 45-centimetre hole through a thin metal wall while almost everyone else was "hootin' and hollerin' and what not" at the popular show, jail official John Van Sticker said.

2-day-old baby kidnapped from U.S. hospital

SEATTLE (R) — A woman masquerading as a doctor walked into a local hospital early Saturday and stole a two-day-old baby boy from his mother's arms. "She was very, very believable," said Diane Gage, a spokeswoman for St. Clare Hospital in Lakewood, a suburb of neighbouring Tacoma. "She had all the right moves and was very confident."

Penguins can't take the heat

EDINBURGH (R) — A Scottish zoo has been forced to use sun cream to protect its prized collection of penguins during an unprecedented spell of hot sunny weather. The heat caused the birds to shed so many feathers during their annual moult that large patches of bare skin had to be covered with cream, Edinburgh zoo said.

'Clyde' was in a bad mood during bank robbery

TOKYO (R) — A knife-wielding teenage couple dubbed "Bonnie and Clyde" by the Japanese media were arrested in Ishioka, north of Tokyo, after they attempted to rob a bank, Japanese newspapers reported. The daily Tokyo Shimbun said the 17-year-old construction worker, brandishing two kitchen knives, and his 16-year-old high-school girlfriend entered a branch of the Joyo Bank in Ibaraki prefecture. The Tokyo Shimbun quoted the boy as telling police, "I was in a bad mood and wanted to create a stir at the bank" before he was arrested.

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